THE ART OF HOMECOMING

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ABSTRACT

This project is concerned with exploring a particular cluster of ideas and stories concerning Homecoming, most notably the presence of the Woman Who Waits for the traveller to return.

Underlying the storied aspects of the visual work are the deeper intentions of soulfulness, personal therapy and social interaction. Although profoundly autobiographical, the metaphoric images I have produced are not only a means to touch others but are inclusive of a broader experience than simply my own.

Throughout the following exegesis I draw on the disciplines of psychology, sociology, mythology and history, to explore the metaphoric presences of the deities Hestia and Hermes and their relationship to ideas of Home and Not - Home.

Particular qualities associated with Home may, for the traveller, become symbolically embodied within the figure of The Woman Who Waits.

This simple perception of The Woman Who Waits, and the process of waiting for the traveller to return was explored and expanded through autobiographic art practice combined with visual and theoretical research.

Throughout the project the expression of emotive autobiographic issues through the running use of metaphor has been combined with increasing technical control and subtlety along with sustained explorations of spatial and compositional dynamics.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Except where explicit reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been relied upon or used without due acknowledgement in the main text and bibliography of the thesis.

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Julie Heron

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Dunlop's The Nearer Shore; Eumerella, The Wave and On the Cliff 2 are pages 52, 55 and 57 respectively, from Brian Dunlop's "Brian Dunlop's Poetry of Painting" in Australian Artist No 158 14, no. 2, (August 1997) pp.52 – 59. Dunlop's Rainbow and Cloud is page 371 from Harriet Edquist's "Brian Dunlop: Observations on the Australian interior" in Art & Australia 36. No. 3. (January – March 1999): pp. 364 – 371.

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INTRODUCTION: PERSONAL STORIES

"We are all bundles of stories that are interlaced, embedded in each other, and connected to stories of greater scope. One story, even an autobiographical one, only hints at the stories that could be told, and in that we are like an onion: peel off one story, and another appears... "[1]

Thomas Moore

From an early age I have been telling stories about my life. I tell oral stories, written stories in many forms especially poetry, visual stories, and sometimes, gestural stories.[2] Much of this storytelling has been for the sheer pleasure of it, much of it event based – a youthful show, but gradually the stories have become darker,[3] more complex and questioning, responsive not only to events shaping my life, but a deepening sense of what these events might mean in the larger scheme of things, and how they may correspond to, be shaped by and in turn shape other stories of my life.

Stories not only allow me a way of expressing, ordering and contemplating experiences, but also enhance and deepen my vision of living and creating. (Plate xiii: fig. 29) External events are linked by inner dialogues and psychological insights; reflected upon, sorted and given a place in personal mythology, thereby deepening my sense of connection to, and place in the world and in time. Further, in gaining insight into the patterning of my life stories, I am able to compare them with the stories of others, a process which at once validates my own experience and also enhances my feelings of community.

Through this enhanced sense of validity and community my stories move from the purely personal into the larger psychological patterns of human experience and

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[1] Moore, Thomas. The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life. New York: Harper Collins, 1996, p. 243.

[2] Narrative is not simply about speech, but may take other forms including music, drama, dance and visual arts.

[3] The beginnings of this inner journey were discussed in my Honours paper, A Journey to the Underworld, 1999.

behaviour that have been referred to by some psychologists as mythic and archetypal.[4] Myth and archetype are experienced as an ongoing presence in my life and work; I turn to these psychological patterns for meaning as readily as others may turn to religion or science.

In my experience the presence of myth and archetype have become obvious through sudden, traumatic events that have precipitated deep psychological processes, or when certain personal stories have recurred so persistently over time it was impossible to avoid noticing the pattern.

One overarching mythological pattern involves recurring separation, waiting, return and reunion. I refer to this pattern as an archetype of Homecoming.[5]

Both the mythical and mundane events of Homecoming include stories that have been related over time and across cultures. Whilst I will refer to some of these other stories in later chapters, Homecoming as both archetype and event features so centrally in my life and creativity, it may be characterised as “the story of my life”. Re-observed from the position of personal experience and awareness it forms the substance and subject of my Masters research project. Shaped in and by solitude and introspection, and gestated over a lengthy period the visual stories of my thesis are metaphors for my life and experiences. They are at once evocative, imaginative and therapeutic. As such they

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[4] This process is a primary subject for psychology, and the insights of depth psychologist Carl Jung and more recently Archetypal psychologists and psychotherapists - especially James Hillman and Thomas Moore, have been valuable to me in exploring these matters. A more detailed definition of terms that are pertinent to this paper and used in Archetypal psychology and other specialized fields may be found in the glossary at the back of this book.

[5] In his summary of Archetypal psychology, Micheal Vannoy makes the point that:
“When Hillman capitalizes the 'Sunburnt Girl', he considers the image archetypal, typical or valuable. For archetypal psychologists, any and every image, even the most apparently banal, can be considered archetypal...”
Michael Vannoy Adams “The Archetypal School” in the Cambridge Companion To Jung, edited by Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson, pp. 101 - 118, Cambridge, N.Y. Oakleigh: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
.

are not about great deeds within the world, nor are they necessarily about successful or happy homecomings; that is to say *progress,* but reflect the complex, mysterious stories of *process* that are inherent in living and in relationships.

STORIES OF SOUL

The central question arising from my exploration of Homecoming is therefore, 'how to express my personal experience of the complexity of this Homecoming process in pictorial form?'

Rather than constantly engaging with new issues many of my thesis artworks are re-workings and re-combinations of the same stories. The tale told with another emphasis. To deepen the meaning of a familiar story I have researched the notions that underpin the idea of Homecoming from the perspectives of mythology, psychology, sociology, literature and visual art.

I aim to produce images that are redolent of my ongoing reflections, images that will engage the viewer, offering more than a slick, decorative or sassy exterior. (Plate xiv: fig. 30) As such I am in agreement with psychotherapist Thomas Moore, when he states: "art is not about the expression of talent or the making of pretty things. It is about the preservation and containment of soul. It is about arresting life and making it available for contemplation." [6]

The concepts of soul and soulmaking as used by Thomas Moore and James Hillman have become important as a means of expressing the quality I seek in my work. They refer not to a religious belief, nor a substance; but rather a perspective, an

[6] Moore, Thomas. Care of the Soul: A guide for cultivating depth and sacredness in everyday life. New York: Harper Perennial, 1992, p. 303.

imaginative manner of viewing things rather than a thing itself.[7]

As an instrument of the imagination, soul becomes enriched with feeding and possibility, withers on an enforced and narrow diet of rationalism and circumscription. Steeping in memory, the slow stirring in of unlikely ingredients, are integral to the souls 'cooking' process. The superb paradox of this process is that an appreciation of the richness and complexity of life develops over time from the simplest, most commonplace, neglected, painful or denigrated everyday experiences, such as that of Homecoming. As Moore remarks, "soul power may emerge from failure, depression, and loss… soul appears in the gaps and holes of experience…"[8] Such a focus allows the telling of visual stories that are often overlooked, deemed unimportant, incoherent, inadmissible, ambiguous, paradoxical or mysterious.

Indeed the process of Homecoming is paradoxical, mysterious and riddled with choice. Scepticism and hope, belief and doubt are in constant flux, and this is evident in the changes of tone and mood in my thesis artworks.

In that timeless Homecoming story The Odyssey, the ancient Greek author Homer, confronts his hero Odysseus (about whom I shall have more to say later), with situations and choices between apparent surety and ambiguity:

> On Calypso's island Odysseus is allowed to choose whether to return to his mortal wife or live on with the deathless goddess, a choice between two kinds of beauty, really, and he chooses the human kind, the kind which is all the more beautiful to us mortals because it will pass away, as we will pass away. [9]

I find the story of Odysseus' choice extremely poignant. His love of transient beauty echoes my own. There is always an undercurrent of awareness in my work of

[7] Hillman, James. Re-visioning Psychology. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975, p. x.

[8] Moore, op. cit. p. 120.

[9] Hyde, Lewis. Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, myth and art. New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 1998, p. 211.

that great and soulful paradox, that in the midst of life we are in death. This paradox, once seemingly a cliché to me, has gained in personal profundity and relevance during my Homecoming experiences.

This awareness is also apparent in many of the works that influence me including paintings of the seventeenth century Dutch artists, in the art of Romantic painters, writers and musicians, and individual artists including Kathe Kollwitz, Felix Gonzales-Torres, and Juan Gonzalez.[10]

Archetypal psychologist James Hillman claims that to live and create psychologically means being lived by a fantasy (as distinct from living in one), being seized by a myth.[11] This claim makes sense of the feeling I have that on a deep level I am not telling the Homecoming story, it is telling me, and in so partaking am confronted repeatedly with situations that test my mettle and my desire.

[10] See for example: Franits, Wayne. Looking at Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art: Realism Reconsidered. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997;
Borsch- Supar, Helmut. Caspar David Friedrich. London: Thames & Hudson, 1973;
Bloom, Harold and Trilling, Lionel. Romantic Poetry and Prose. New York, London, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973;
Kearns, Martha. Kathe Kollwitz: woman and artist. New York; Feminist Press, 1976;
Spector, Nancy. Felix Gonzalez-Torres. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1995;
McManus, Irene. Dreamscapes: The Art of Juan Gonzalez. New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1994.

[11] Hillman, op. cit. p. 143.

ART AS INTERACTION

At the beginning of my Masters candidature I had a "crisis of faith" in art after reading Suzi Gablik's books The Re-Enchantment of Art and Conversations Before the End of Time. I questioned why I should be making more "things" in a first world country that was not only cluttered with things, but was in environmental and social crisis. I decided after much soul-searching, that this process was not simply self-indulgence, but something essential to my wellbeing. The making of art has enabled and continues to enable me to express a range of emotions including deep and unarticulated sorrow, anger and fear that may have, in other circumstances, overwhelmed me. (Plate xv: fig 31)

Indeed my extensive use of charcoal as a drawing medium arose during an earlier time of personal depression, wherein a whole range of senses shut down and I was lost in a shadowy Underworld with no certainty of Homecoming. But the process of drawing, and moreover the pertinence of drawing in charcoal, enabled me to move from simply articulating my emotions to actively appreciating and learning from this experience.

Psychotherapist Thomas Moore points toward a relevant aspect of charcoal drawing in Care of the Soul when he remarks; "emptiness can be rife with feeling-tone, images of catharsis, and emotions of regret and loss. As a shade of mood, grey can be as interesting and as varied as it is in black-and-white photography."[12] (Plate xvi: fig 32) However, in my drawings, it is not only the "feeling-tone" of the charcoal that I find helpful, but also the artistic engagement and the sheer physicality of markmaking and rubbing back. Through touching I am grounded.

[12] Moore, op. cit. pp. 146 - 147.

Touch played an important part in the construction of the three dimensional works which form a part of this thesis. Exhilarated yet somewhat intimidated by an unexpected need to work both three dimensionally and in colour for a time, I found the repetitive layering, painting, waxing and then smoothing off calming and sensuous. (Plate xvi: fig 33)

In summation, tending to self, the soulful expression of self-referential stories and at times the celebration of feelings of personal gain have all found an outlet in the artwork I make. For me, art *is* therapy.

Since it is a personal imperative to continue making art, should my social conscience dictate the making of art with an environmental or political message?

There was then and isn't now any easy answer to this question and I suspect it will be an issue that engages me for the rest of my life. I am not satisfied with the effectiveness of outright militancy in bringing about change. However both my own experience and extensive reading have convinced me of the potential for positive change within the making and sharing of art, and it is to this end that I strive. [13]

I work with a modicum of hope and the awareness that (like Homecomings): "Authentic works of art do not promise… glib happy endings… There are, in fact, no promises; there is only the chance that change can occur."[14]

The need to extend my understanding of 'self at home' to 'self at home in the world' was therefore and remains an elusive yet critical and testing factor within my art. As Deborah J. Haynes comments: "Committing ourselves to self-transformative work is also a social practice... Because the self is not separate from society, to engage in trying

[13] See for example: Boyle, Jimmy. The Pain of Confinement. London: Pan Books, 1984;
Day, Christopher. Places of the soul: Architecture and environmental design as a healing art. London: Thorsons, 1999;
Haynes, Deborah J. The Vocation of the Artist. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997;
Spector, op. cit.

[14] Haynes, op. cit. p. 63.

to change the self inevitably leads, even in modest ways, to the need to transform society. "[15]

This philosophy is most obviously manifest in the series On Hand. It is my testament to women all over the world who have encountered the trials of Homecoming. (Plate xvii: fig. 34)

Engaging in self-revelatory art is a mixed and often precarious blessing. When art is no longer purely a means of expressing deep feelings and experiences, when the work has an agenda that is in some way inclusive of others there is a tension between disclosure and privacy discussed rather aptly by Lewis Hyde in Trickster Makes This World:

> There are two strategies here, privacy and shaping. Privacy means going forward without going public… But the privacy that allows this freedom can turn lonely, and finally sterile…There is great freedom in working in secret, but it is powerless freedom if the enclosure never breaks… [However] There is an art-making that begins with pore-seeking (lifting the shame covers, finding the loophole, refusing to guard the secrets), that uncovers a plenitude of material hidden from conventional eyes. [16]

Adopting a mythic, storied approach to my work allows for personal disclosure whilst protecting my privacy. It also enables me to present moral and social ideas without resorting to absolutism, thereby creating an undercurrent of verisimilitude and possibility. [17]

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[15] ibid. p. 226.

[16] Hyde, op. cit. pp. 309 - 311.

[17] Even as fairy tales do: See for example Warner, Marina. From The Beast to the Blonde: On fairy tales and their tellers. London: Chatto & Windus, 1994.
The importance of fairy stories and tales as a source for exploring moral ideas without resorting to absolutism has been well illustrated in the artworks of Paula Rego: McEwen, John. Paula Rego. London: Phaidon Press, 1993; Tate Gallery. Paula Rego. London: Tate Gallery, 1997.

METAPHOR

In order to make art that is inclusive, soulful and profound, is sufficiently personal that it fuels my imagination and yet retains a degree of privacy, I use metaphor as a way of expressing myself.

Metaphors are psychic images that are always prefaced with the idea of "as if", that is, we are not talking about symbols, signs, allegories, representations or any concretised form of communication – the image must always be allowed to speak for itself. [18]

For instance, the depiction of a chair that appears repeatedly in my work (Plate xviii: fig. 35; plate xxi, fig. 42) should not be seen as a representation, symbol or sign of, for example, patience or waiting, although these ideas may well be present. It is not the personification of a particular moral quality or stance. Rather it must be seen for what it is – and perhaps for what it is not, allowing the imagination freedom to roam:

It is plain wooden chair. It is hard – not made for ease. And yet it is something upon which one may sit, rest, pause, however uncomfortably.

It is a chair of the type that people of my generation associate with institutions, it has overtones of reluctant education, and of lengthy waiting for officialdom to take its course. It is sturdy, it endures. One result of its endurance is its reemergence in the heart and centre of nurture of certain homes – in the kitchen no less. But the chair in the drawings is not in either place. It stands outside in a field or a garden in Duet for One and Bridal Sweet, and in undefined, enigmatic spaces in Still on the Line and Containing Emotions. As such it is dis-placed and its displacement seems to have significance. Often it faces away from the viewer. Often it is alone, but sometimes there are other chairs present. The way in which the chairs are arranged may or may not be

[18] Samuels, Andrew. Jung and the Post-Jungians. London & New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985. p. 242.

significant. One is moved to wonder if the chairs have just been vacated or are waiting to be occupied. And so on…

The chair example illustrates Hillman's point that "… the true iconoclast is the image itself which explodes its allegorical meanings, releasing startling new insights…"[19]

These insights, coupled with processes of review, interaction (bricolage) and enstorying, spark new images, create movement in my work. Many of the stories these images are moved to tell traverse time, speaking not only of my experiencing of the past, but predicting my experience of the future. They also move outward from self involvement to allow my experience to touch and resonate with the experiences of others, thereby deepening the *anima mundi* or "soul of the world".

[19] Hillman, op. cit. p. 8.

CHAPTER ONE: MYTHOLOGY AS METAPHOR

"… the poet's voice speaks from no
crevice in the ground between
mid-earth and underworld
breathing fumes of what is deadly to know,
news larvae in tombs
and twists of time do feed upon,

but from the hearth stone, the lamp light,
the heart of the matter where the

house is held
yet here, the warning light at the edge of town!
the City will go out in time, will go out
into time, hiding even its embers."[1]

Robert Duncan

Since reading Jean Shinoda Bolen's book Goddesses in Everywoman[2] many years ago I have spent much time reviewing psychology's interest and use of Ancient Greek myth as a means of imaginatively describing archetypal patterns of human behaviour; narrating stories which are not confined to their source, but which can be applied across time, gender and culture. Such readings of mythological stories may not therefore reflect accurately the belief, or customs of the Ancient Greeks, or the apparent gender of the deities involved, however Archetypal psychology asserts that they "reflect accurately the illusions and entanglements of the soul …" and I accept that this is so.[3]

Read imaginatively and metaphorically the stories of these mythic beings and their complex relations with each other, allow for varying points of view, distancing,

[1] Duncan, Robert. "Tribal Memories" quoted in Casey, Edward. S. Spirit and Soul: Essays in philosophical psychology. Dallas: Spring, 1991, pp. 249 –250.

[2] I have found much 'food for thought' in this approach, and have written an unpublished paper Dancing with Aphrodite on the influence this divine archetype may have on attitudes to the body and to dance in particular.

[3] Hillman, James. A Blue Fire: Selected writings by James Hillman edited by Thomas Moore. New York: Harper & Row, 1989, p. 40.

insight (divine vision), and inspiration (divine breath). They focus understanding and join disparate experiences together.

The metaphoric stories and characteristics of the goddess and god Hestia and Hermes, and their relation to the Home, illuminate both my creative processes and the Homecoming archetype, and therefore I will explore this in some detail.

Research suggests that in Ancient Greece each deity provided a separate yet valued function:

> Hestia provided the sanctuary where people bonded together into the family – the place to come home to. Hermes was the protector at the door, and the guide and companion in the world – where communication, knowing one's way around, being clever and having good luck all make a difference.[4]

However while the domains of Hestia and Hermes are not overlapping, they do meet in complex and shifting boundaries that archetypal psychologists suggest are reflected in changing interpersonal attitudes.[5] The following interplay between a well-travelled writer and her elderly Greek mother-in-law provides an example of this:

> I sit very still. At this moment it seems certain she has always known that the beginning and the end would consist of visits, even that the intervening years were not much more. She has the knowledge. She is the survivor. Hers is the triumph. Her life does not consist of visits: she has a place, her place, has always had it.[6]

Changes in everyday behaviour and custom throughout history also reflect shifting boundaries between the domains of Hestia and Hermes. For example, Witold Rybczynski in Home: A Short History of an Idea, points out changes to seventeenth

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[4] Bolen, Jean Shinoda. Goddesses in Everywoman: A new psychology of women. NewYork: Harper Colophon, 1985, p. 109.

[5] See, for example: Kirksey, Barbara. "Hestia: A Background of Psychological Focusing". In Facing the Gods, edited by James Hillman**.** Dallas: Spring, 1988;
Paris, Ginette. Pagan Meditations: The worlds of Aphrodite, Artemis, and Hestia, translated by G. Moore. Dallas: Spring, 1986.

[6] Bouras, Gillian. Aphrodite and the Others. Ringwood, Victoria: McPhee Gribble, 1994, p. 165.

century Dutch domestic boundaries, as the house ceased to be a place of work and became a more privatised space. (See plate i: fig 1)[7]

> When visitors were required to take off their shoes or put on slippers, it was not immediately on entering the house - the lower floor was still considered to be a part of the public street – but on going upstairs. That was where the public realm stopped and the home began. *This boundary was a new idea*, and the order and tidiness of the household were evidence neither of fastidiousness nor of a particular cleanliness, but instead *of a desire to define the home as a separate, special place*.[8] (my emphasis)

HESTIA

Hestia and Hermes not only divided the traveller from the homebody, the place of commerce from the domestic sphere, they also divided the sacred and the profane.

In ancient Greece wherever Hestian fires burned, security and peace prevailed as a sacred duty, whether in the home or in the temple found in every town. The injunctions to "keep the home fires burning" and "keep the faith" refer to her inner commitment to, and sacred identification with, maintaining a home. Archetypal psychologist Ginette Paris further suggests, "She is the heart(h) flame at "the center of the Earth, the centre of the home, and our own personal center."[9]

The Latin word for hearth is *focus*. Hestia as the guardian of the fire in the temple and home *focuses* the sacred within the everyday.[10] For example, the decision to ask Cathy Freeman to rekindle Hestia's flame at the 2000 Olympics in Australia – for that is what the Olympic torch is; was immensely symbolic, a recognition and a

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[7] Illustrated in Alpers, Svetlana. The Art of Describing: Dutch art in the seventeenth century. London: Penguin, 1989, p. 170.

[8] See Rybczynski, Witold. Home: A Short History of an Idea. New York: Viking Press 1986, p. 66.

[9] Paris, Ginette. Pagan Meditations: The Worlds of Aphrodite, Artemis, and Hestia, translated by G. Moore. Dallas: Spring, 1986, p.167.

[10] Bolen, op. cit. pp. 110 – 111.

promise. It was, I suggest, a public *focusing*, evoking feelings of national unity and a sense of re-homing for many.

Part of the aim of my thesis is to re-focus attention on stories that are blurred or have become invisible through familiarity. As such I re-read household items such as coathangers, and scrutinise women's hands, the soulful human interface between self and the world. (Plate xviii: fig. 36)

Hestia was rarely depicted by the Ancient Greeks in human form – rather they honoured her as an invisible spirit, ephemeral and yet enduring as a flame. [11] James Hillman further suggests that by being 'no-body', Hestia gathers people together and enables soul to have a place.[12] Hestia's soulful presence is an ever present, everyday mystery that "… grounds us and surrounds us; in this sense, it is both the horizon and the environment of life."[13]

HERMES

Although Hermes was envisaged by the ancients as a young man, many of his attributes, like Hestia's, partake of an invisible spirit. A swift god, a thief, Hermes is present in transitions, transactions and transformations. Hermes is a god of chance – lucky chance, as Kerenyi describes it in Hermes Guide of the Souls: The Mythologem of the Masculine Source of Life, [14] and his luck lies in 'meeting and finding' As such he

[11] ibid. p. 107 –109.

[12] Hillman, James. Facing the Gods. Dallas: Spring, 1988, p.104.

[13] Haynes, op. cit. p. 25.

[14] Kerenyi, Karl. Hermes Guide of the Souls: The mythologem of the masculine source of life. Dallas: Spring, 1976, p. 23.

is also a bricoleur, having the ability to see through appearances, to envision new uses for the things he sees around him, and to change them. [15]

This ability is characteristic of the unseen reviewing, re-shaping and re-storying process I identified earlier as the manner in which I create artwork and relate to the world. Hermes is expressed overtly in the assemblaged pieces of my thesis. [16] He is also present in a dual kind of vision, a paradoxical vision, which may hold two disparate things together.

This vision, expressing the physical and emotional reality of my Homecoming experience occurs in many of my works, especially the series Duet for One and Bridal Sweet.

They show areas where Hermes was typically honoured and presenced; the spaces between, that carry us across – yards, gateways, doorways, windows and boundaries. These are, oddly, places of relationship, but also of potential strangeness, liminal areas "full of expectant fantasy…"[17] – in short, transformative places. The Homecoming story is full of such places. (Plate xix: fig. 37)

Hermes, in his capacity as a god of between-ness, acts as a *psychopomp* or guide for the dead, since he can move easily between this world and the Underworld,[18] this world and the heavens. His movement between darkness and light is through 'twilight' – a place of double sightedness, double meaning and duplicity, where things lose their

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[15] ibid. p. 26.

[16] Maxine Borowsky Junge's book Creative Realities: The Search for Meanings, Lanham, Maryland & Cummor Hill, Oxford: University Press of America, 1998 was important in adding to my understanding of the strategies and behaviours that underlie my manner of creating.

[17] Moore, Thomas. "Neither Here Nor There." Parabola 25, no. 1 (2000): 36.

[18] Moore, Thomas. Soulmates: Honouring the mysteries of love and relationship. New York: Harper/Collins, 1994, p.129.

everyday meanings and clarity and take on a curious translucence. Once again these qualities manifest themselves in Duet for One and Bridal Sweet.

Reverie and the twilight state between waking and sleeping is a common time for artistic inspiration. Here too, Hermes is at work transporting and returning our souls from the imaginal Underworld. This is not a state of reduction, but a curious state where possibility is expanded. Much of the inspiration for my thesis work occurs during lengthy periods of solitary country driving, Hermes being characteristically twice presenced – in the physical and the mental transportation.

Unable to settle anywhere, this metaphoric God is everywhere, penetrating – transgressing even the boundaries between world and home, if he so desires. Time and again as I tried to focus on drawing Hestia's everyday presence, Hermes would literally enter the picture, as in the series of coathanger drawings – Still on the Line.

Hermes is, therefore, also a presence in the heart(h) of the home, in the intimate rooms of relationship. He is the shadowy mystery in the heart of the familiar - the unstoppable deathly stranger that pierces stability and continuity so that "every house… [becomes] an opening and a point of departure to the paths that come from far off and lead away into darkness." [19]

[19] Kerenyi, op. cit. p. 84.

Plate i 

HOME

"Although we go about our daily lives without the constant awareness of being at home, home is a groundedness, a connection to our time and culture. "[20]

Margaret F. Moloney

As I have indicated above, the association of Hermes and Hestia is one of shifting, paradoxical, and hidden boundaries. Even as Hermes, the trickster thief steals into the heart of the home, the traveller carries Hestia within his or her heart, and it is within such heartfelt emotions that the archetypal Home ranges far and wide.[21]

The archetype of Home, or *oikos,* may entail a planetary consciousness as well as the profound sense of belonging to a particular place - a locale, a neighbourhood, region, a 'country', or a nation.[22] Home is also typically imagined as a private, familiar and familial and therefore perhaps sacred space, which may correspond physically with a particular house or dwelling but may extend to the houses of others, to a garden, and in urbanized, transitory Western society even to a car. During my father's terminal illness he spent many hours just sitting in his car – unable to drive – seemingly comfortable and peaceful, at home in this familiar vehicle of dreams, and perhaps transported in memory.

I too experienced surprising feelings of homecoming on moving to the country home in which I now live, even though it is a rented property. It is a home that includes a dedicated studio for the first time. I celebrated my new connection by the swift and joyous process of creating a garden. This new home has nurtured the new phase of my

[20] Moloney, Margaret F. 'The Meanings of Home in the Stories of Older Women' in Western Journal of Nursing Research 19, Issue 2 (April 1997): 174.

[21] Hillman, James. The Thought of the Heart. Dallas: Spring, 1981.

[22] See Terkenli, Theano S. "Home as a Region" in Geographical Review 85, Issue 3 (July 1995): 324 – 334; Day, Christopher. Places of the Soul: Architecture and environmental design as a healing art. London: Thorsons, 1999, for more on this.

life and with it my research artworks; and the house, gardens, boundaries and views figure prominently in many of the works.

Therefore it was with a sense of kinship over time that I read the following passage on seventeenth century Dutch life:

> The Dutch loved their homes. They shared this old Anglo-Saxon word – ham, heijm in Dutch – with the other peoples of Northern Europe. "Home" brought together the meanings of house and household, of dwelling and of refuge, of ownership and of affection. "Home" meant the house, but also everything that was in it and around it, as well as the people, and the sense of satisfaction and contentment that all these conveyed. [23]

Clearly these were Hestian homes, revealed not only by the manner in which they gathered the family unit together and provided a place of sanctuary and wellbeing, but also because of the central importance of the kitchen, with its hearth and stove, and abundance of stores.[24]

The seventeenth century was a period that saw an unprecedented explosion of paintings with Dutch home life as their subject. Such artworks were a celebration of, and a means of decorating this newly private, personal and feminised space.[25] These genre paintings display 'the sacredness of the ordinary and the everyday' in their sensuous attention to detailing Dutch interiors, occupants and accoutrements, and it is for this sense of homeliness as much as their technical accomplishment that I love them, and respond artistically to them through my own works. (Plate i: fig. 2)[26]

But our images of home not only partake of a spatial dimension, they also have temporal aspects – qualities of time and timelessness. The passage of time, its

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[23] Rybczynski, op. cit. p. 61 - 62.

[24] Rybczynski. op. cit. pp. 72 –74; Paris, op. cit. pp. 186-188, writes at some length on the subject of 'Hestia Tamia' - "she who takes care of the reserves… guardian of the food supplies.'

[25] Alpers, Svetlana. The art of describing: Dutch art in the seventeenth century. London: Penguin, 1989.

[26] Illustrated ibid, p. 195.

swiftness, its memorialising and nostalgia, it's bringing together or 're-membering' and its tricks, are qualities attributed to Hermes, who is, as I mentioned earlier, associated with death and the underworld. But Hestia has an opposing temporal influence. She slows down, takes and makes time.[27]

Under the aegis of these deities we may speak fondly of a 'family home', whilst dwelling happily in an altogether different situation. As immigrants we may yearn for the 'old country', unmindful or unknowing that the homeland we knew has undergone changes that are totally at odds with our feelings and memories of people and places we treasure. Home too, may have a grail-like quality as we dream and search and plan for the future. And sometimes – magically – the 'dream home' of our future and the remembered home of the past coalesce in the present becoming a place to dream, remember and experience everyday life to its fullest. Home then becomes a 'place of the soul', a place where we feel most strongly the commingling of Hestia and Hermes.[28]

It has been suggested that it is a universal need for people to feel 'at home' in the world.[29] It is this need to be 'at home' that lies at the heart of my introspection, and therefore my art. Events in my own childhood created what I now recognise as unwarranted feelings of abandonment and estrangement, a loss of being 'at home' with myself. It is a feeling and a pattern I have carried over into my relationship with my daughter, my lovers, my friends and my home. Unable to settle for any great length of time, yet with a yearning for home that is sometimes experienced physically, I have hovered in the wavering boundaries between home and the world, home and not-home.

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[27] Todd, Sandra. Spiritual Homelessness in Today's World. [Online] [c1998] last accessed 11/03/2000. Available at http://www.mythic-consciousness.org/hestia.htm; Bolen, op. cit. pp. 111 – 112.

[28] Day, op. cit.

[29] Moloney, loc. cit.

Pulled deeply into a profound experience of this pattern just prior to commencing art school, I have struggled to express insights that have arisen, and struggled also to bring my self home. During my Honours year whilst emerging from a long depression, I identified with and wrote about the Goddess Persephone's Journey to the Underworld, about a daughter wrenched from her home, her mother and a naive view of the world, and fundamentally changed by her experience.[30] At the time of writing it seemed that I had already made the return journey, and perhaps on some levels I had. But I was unmindful that the Underworld is also a place where the trickster Hermes moves with impunity, and Hermes was the guide who took Persephone home. My feelings of return have been sifted and shifted around in the last two years, and the sense of homecoming I now feel is deeper and more penetrating, more profound (soulful), more expansive and mysterious than I previously thought.

NOT HOME (UNHEIM)

"Hestia is part heimlich, that which is familiar, - homelike- and part unheimlich, hidden, expressed, unconscious, unfamiliar, unhome-like."[31]

Sandra Todd

If the presence of Hestia is characterized by soulful feelings of centeredness, warmth, sacredness, security, stores, stability, community and inwardness, if her presence is central to the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the planet herself, then her absence or suppression would be profoundly experienced. Lack of Hestia creates feelings of being off centre, fragmentized, destabilised, cold, desecrated, isolated, insecure, and of scarcity, want, and loss. The openings created by Hermes movements become gaping holes and the safety, warmth and mystery of Home is lost.

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[30] Heron, Julie. A Journey to the Underworld. Honours paper, University of Ballarat, 1999.

[31] Todd. op. cit. p. 5.

Home becomes what the Germans refer to as *unheim* or 'not-home': a ghostly, uncanny and haunting presence, which may also be translated as a 'haunted house'.

Loss of Hestia may feel like abandonment, a loss of boundaries, or loss of self. As a young wife I experienced the dissatisfactions and distortions of Hestia produced by enforced containment (being only allowed to identify with the Home) feeling imprisoned, stifled and invisible. As a Woman Who Waits, aware of the recurrence of old psychological patterns I felt anew a sense of containment, and expressed this through the presentation of undergraduate works in boxes and the creation of three dimensional box sculptures in the latter stages of my Masters research.

History shows that my earlier predicament was not unique. During the so-called second wave of feminism, the conjunction of women and the Home became a focal point for social and artistic critique as well as, paradoxically, a celebration of the arts, of women and of the home.[32]

Stories of estrangement - homelessness, homesickness and sickness of the Home appear when Hestia is de-centered and de-mystified rather than honoured as an invisible yet living flame.

So too, over identification with the home, may result in fussiness, stultification and idealisation. The depictions of the home in works of Victorian artists such as Helen Allingham (Plate ii: fig. 3) [33] are idealized; the images of cosy cottages, clean, well fed children and smiling parents at odds with the reality of the poverty, grime and squalor of Industrial Age England, yet the idealization was part of their charm. With time, distance

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[32] See for example: Chadwick, Whitney. Women, Art and Society. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1990; Lippard, Lucy, R. From the Center: feminist essay's on women's art. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976; Peterson, Karen, and J.J. Wilson. Women Artists: Recognition and reappraisal from the early middle ages to the twentieth century. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

[33] Illustrated in Clayton-Payne, Andrew. Victorian Cottages. London: Phoenix, c1993, paperback edition, 1997.

and the addition of discrete technology these and other similar bucholic scenes are now also the inspiration of modern homemakers.[34]

In recent times artists have looked anew at the relationships within the home, the isolation of the potentially explosive, yet chill fire of the nuclear family,[35] and to the homely illusions and delusions of the suburbs. (Plate ii: fig. 4)[36]

As *oikos* (home) is diminished, its counterpart *polis* (not home) grows. We feel the rude manifestations of the polis within the Hestian sacred space. The scorched earth policies of marauding armies, runaway bureaucracy and big business turn Hestian warmth and security to killing flame. We get our fingers burnt, become burnt out, struggle for warmth, grow ashen and cold, as we strive to compensate for her lack of presence, in our home, families, and the societies we inhabit.

The extinguished flame of Hestia had a deep significance to the Ancients**:**

> The Hestia of a home was always extinguished on an occasion of mourning, if the latter signified at the same time the end of a household, the death of a family, the abandonment of a location, and the dispersion of those who had formerly constituted the household. [37]

To the Ancient Greeks this was a sign of profound change, which resonates with much of contemporary experience:

> "I don't have a home,
>
> and I live there
>
> all the time."

writes Julia Vinograd in her poem Downhill.[38]

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[34] See for example Ingram, Robin. "Country Squire: Cooks' Endeavours" in Australian Country Style. [March 2000] 162.

[36] Illustrated in Lawson, Mark. John Keane: conflicts of interest. Edinburgh: Mainstream in conjunction with Angela Flowers Gallery, 1995, p. 88.

[37] Paris, op. cit. p. 16.

[38] Vinograd, Julia. "Downhill." In This is Women's Work: An anthology of prose and poetry, edited by Susan Efros, 72. Los Angeles: Panjandrum, 1980.

And Kirksey adds "The soul, gone astray, is a soul without psychic connection to this Goddess and her centeredness. The soul can't come home for there is no place for the homecoming."[39]

Literally concretising these issues was Rachael Whitread's sculpture House, which filled the interior spaces of a terrace house with plaster then removed the outer walls and roof. (Plate ii: fig. 5)[40]

Whilst it was still in existence House, "set a familiar past in the space-time of today… [exposed] the private… to public view…" writes Doreen Massey.[41] House exposed the boundaries and solidified the central (Hestian) space of life. In doing so the "social time-space was deadened, muted. The movement, the noise, the interchange… were gone… Mute it stood there, asking us to remember, to think, to question…"[42]

As such House, while it remained in situ, was "potentially, and productively disturbing" a "dislocating, evocation of memories."[43] And the god evoked by the swift backwards movement of remembering is none other than the dark stranger, the trickster, the bricoleur, Hermes himself.

There is an understanding within Archetypal psychology that the cure for disease may not be less of what ails you, but more.[44] In the light of this, it is only when

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[39] Kirksey, op. cit. p.105.

[40] Illustrated in Rachel Whiteread: House, edited by James Lingwood. London: Phaidon Press, 1995, p. 99.

[41] Massey, Doreen. "space-time and the politics of location." In Rachel Whiteread: House, edited by James Lingwood, London: Phaidon Press, 1995, p. 43.

[42] ibid.

[43] ibid.

[44] See for example: Moore, Thomas. Soulmates: Honouring the mysteries of love and relationship. New York: Harper/Collins, 1994, p. 149.

we can fully know what we have lost and accept that the peculiar feeling of incompleteness will always remain; can we move on, begin a Homecoming journey.

For in losing the possibility for a return Home we do not lose the possibility of re-envisaging and revising home. Rather it becomes possible to see home from new perspectives, pulling together new patterns and unexpectedly 'finding' soul in what we thought we had lost. (Plate xix: fig. 38)

Blind optimism? Maybe so, but as Deborah J. Haynes points out, speaking about the future of our Home world in The Vocation of the Artist:

> Although no single quality enables us to imagine what might be in the face of what has been and what is, hope and desire are essential… Utopia arises from desire, but its realization depends on hope, which is itself grounded not in wishful thinking but in willed action.[45]

[45] Haynes, op. cit. p. 241.

PLATE 2 IMAGE REMOVED

CHAPTER TWO: HOMECOMING AND THE WOMAN WHO WAITS

> "[T] he many stories with their many themes keep us aware of the liminality of everyday experience, the threshold where the human and the divine converse, or where closed human understanding is prised open by fate."[1]
>
> Thomas Moore

Many Homecoming stories focus on the return of the individual from an archetypal Heroic physical and/or psychological Journey. The Heroic Journey as such may be complimented by an idealised image of Home that is departed from and returned to. Unchanging, peopled with friends and family who wait faithfully patiently and indefinitely, for the traveller to return.

However, in concentrating on Home from the idealised viewpoint of the wayfarer on an Heroic Journey; the non-idealised stories of home are often distorted, truncated or reduced to banalities, repressing a rich, diverse and potentially empowering body of experience.[2]

The national and cultural diversity of Australia engenders a wealth of Homecoming stories on many levels.

The forced colonization of the country for use as a penal colony by the British government created far-reaching stories of separation, waiting and failed homecomings

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[1] Moore, Thomas. The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life. New York: Harper Collins, 1996, pp. 241-2

[2] See for example:
Bouras, Gillian. Aphrodite and the Others. Ringwood, Victoria: McPhee Gribble, 1994;
Davis, Jenny. dear heart. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998;
Hampton, Blanche. Prisons and Women. Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1993;
Throssell, Ric. 'A Soldier Returns' in The White Chrysanthemum: Changing Images of Australian Motherhood edited by Nancy Keesing. London, Sydney, Melbourne, Singapore, and Manila: Angus & Robertson, 1977;
Moloney, Margaret. F. 'The Meanings of Home in the Stories of Older Women' in Western Journal of Nursing Research 19, Issue 2 (April 1997): 166 – 176;
Neto, Virginia V. Prison Visitors: A Profile Paper from Voices and Visions: The Family and Corrections First National conference [online: 8 pages] [c1989]: last accessed November 2001. Available: http://www.fcnetwork.org/1st conf/

for both the indigenous inhabitants and the convicts sent here. Later, people from many countries - including my own grandparents, saw Australia as a future home, but they too created in the wake of their emigration, stories of waiting, separation and hopes for future return and homecoming.

Past Government policy of separating indigenous children and children 'at risk' from their families has forcibly created powerful stories of removal, loss, search and reunion, that are only now being heard.

Itinerant departures too, are ours, from the famous "Clancy's gone to Queensland droving, and we don't know where he are,"[3] through stories of families again forced apart by Government policy during the Great Depression, and in more recent difficult global and national economic and social times. As I write, a complex, volatile and saddening story of failed homecoming is unfolding within Australia's detention centers.[4]

As well as a courtship conducted largely by letter during the Second World War, my own family history provides me with another homecoming story – of my own conception after Dad returned from a stint of six weeks work in the bush.

Contemporary living provides further examples as families are separated by factors as diverse as the rural/urban drift, teenage runaways, divorce, imprisonment[5] and work patterns that include extended employment overseas.

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[3] Paterson, A. B. 'Banjo'. Singer of the Bush: Complete works 1885 – 1900. Collected and introduced by Rosamund Campbell and Philippa Harvie. Sydney: Lansdowne, c. 1983.

[4] I refer here to the plight of refugees, especially, although not exclusively of Afghan nationality, which has been the subject of much discussion, debate and political manoeuvring throughout the year 2001 – 2002.

[5] See Monteree-Zaleski, Elizabeth. The Prison Series, foreword by Annette Van den Bosch. Melbourne: National Trust & J & J Printing, 1997; Neto. op. cit.

THE WOMAN WHO WAITS

"Then when the riding's over, to our bush we will return;
We'll kiss the wives and sweethearts we left behind to mourn.
We'll embrace them in our arms, love, and I'll take you in mine
And I'll tell you of the riding on the banks of the Condamine." [6]

Anon.

During the Journey, Home is often distilled to a series of Hestian images that serve to embody much of what the Journey is not – warmth, security, stability, immutability, nurture. These images may gather around the memory of a familiar, much loved hearth – the centre of a dwelling, location or country, but may also be embodied in a lyrical archetype - the Woman Who Waits. The Woman Who Waits is at once the embodied and soulful expression of the conservation and centrality of Hestia.

While it would be presumptuous and wrong to suggest that only women wait it is my contention that women and waiting have been typically joined in archetypal, historical and real life events. For example:

> A 1988 study done on visitors to three of the nine prisons then operating in California, U.S.A. showed: "Nine out of ten visitors were women, usually the wife (42 percent), mother (14 percent), or girlfriend (11 percent) of an inmate. Even in the women's unit at Norco, most visitors were also women.[7]

Waiting lurks within the fluctuations, controls and compromises of relationship, and waiting is uniquely built into women's life cycles in the form of pregnancy and birth. Virginia Woolf, Susan Efros and others have brought our attention to the dilemmas posed for women artists between the need for continued artistic freedoms and the "patience and the waiting" of women artists within relationships and families.[8] This concern finds expression in my own recent work, as I contemplate the solitary gains

[6] "The Banks of the Condamine." in The Penguin Australian Song Book, compiled by J. S. Manifold. Harmondsworth, England and Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1964, p. 132.

[7] Neto. op. cit. p. 2. of 8.

[8] Woolf, Virginia. A Room of One's Own. London: Granada, 1981; Efros, Susan ed. This is Women's Work: An anthology of prose and poetry. Los Angeles: Panjandrum, 1980.

made in self confidence, self-reliance and artistic endeavor on the eve of renewed coupledom. (Plate xx: fig. 39)

A most eloquent and critical exploration of this aspect of the Woman Who Waits, is found in Paula Rego's 'Dog Woman' drawings**.** (Plate iii: fig. 6.)[9] "Rego's Dog Women are about the patience and the waiting, the voluntary suspension of will of a woman in love…the Dog Woman embodies the survival of life's greatest and most private humiliations and intimate grief."[10]

Therefore although waiting may be broadly or simply defined as: "to defer action or departure for specified time or until some expected event occurs…"[11] or " to remain stationary in readiness or expectation... to pause for another to catch up",[12] this definition hardly encompasses the emotional dimension that can be a part of waiting. The definition arises from an outer directed, action oriented view of the world that equates waiting with a pause between physical or mental movement, a passivity, stoicism or patience few in reality possess. Stoicism "indifference to pleasure or pain"[13] has often been designated stereotypically as a masculine quality, while patience "the quiet and self-possessed waiting for something" [14] has been seen as a feminine quality. Yet anyone who has waited for any length of time knows that waiting is often a state of furious mental and emotional activity, a roller coaster ride that circulates between hope and despair, fear and self-abrogation.

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[9] Illustrated in Tate Gallery. Paula Rego. London: Tate Gallery, 1997, p. 27.

[10] Tate Gallery. Paula Rego. London: Tate Gallery, 1997. Rego herself experienced the emotional turmoil associated with the slow death of a partner.

[11] Turner, George W., ed. The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary: Of Current English. 7th ed. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 1281.

[12] Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, Mass: G. & C. Merriam, 1976, p. 1001.

[13] Turner, op. cit. p. 1113.

[14] ibid. p. 799.

Waiting is full of questions, spoken or unspoken: When? Where? Why? How? What if? Who? as the following passage from dear heart - an edited collection of letters written over a four year period during the Second World War by a young wife waiting for her husband's return, shows:

> 15th June
> Letter 29
> My Own Love,
> Are you reading my daily message in your diary? When I wrote 'I love you' on every one of the 365 days I never dreamt we'd be apart for so much of it. Do you remember how worried I was when you first joined up that you'd be posted somewhere in England where I couldn't stay near you? I couldn't bear to be separated from you for even a few hours. Do you think I was greedy? Was I wrong? To want you so much? This is truly more terrible than anything I could have imagined, but I know you must be alright or my heart would tell me differently… after you left Bombay you couldn't have reached Singapore before it fell, could you? No, you must be safe![15]

These letters went largely undelivered and unanswered, and poignantly illustrate my point that the more intensely focused the emotion - the closer to our heart's home, and the greater lack of control over these outcomes we feel, the more difficult the wait. (Plate iii: fig. 7)[16]

[15] Davis, Jenny. dear heart. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998, p. 60 – 61.

[16] Illustrated in Nunn, Pamela Gerrish. Problem Pictures: Women and Men in Victorian Painting. Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1995, plate 3.2.

PAGE iii

SEPARATION

An American Defence Force study has identified two stages of waiting pertinent to this research: Separation and Reunion.[17]

The initial experience of prolonged waiting, of unchosen solitude, may be characterised as I expressed it in A Journey to the Underworld, [18] by a flattening of experience, of denial, of depression, hunger, numbness, monotony and mourning.

While waiting may involve intense mourning, it does not entirely succumb to it, rather it becomes a balancing act between scepticism and hope. And while waiting varies in intensity, it also varies in duration.[19] This may not be simply a reflection of the actual time passing but a complex mixture of time and intensity – a test of *endurance*.

Therefore although The Woman Who Waits occupies and embodies space in the present, she is often mentally living either in the past or the future. Time hangs heavy in her hands. She is, in effect, 'doing time'. As such her thoughts move restlessly between the past and the future in an attempt to escape the present knowledge of the weight of slow years stretching out before her. Her store of memories, (Hestia too was the keeper of the household stores) are weighed against the hope of new supplies in the future, but the measure seems painfully in doubt. It is no coincidence that as Penelope – Homers'

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[17] Wood, Suzanne and Jacquelyn Scarville. Waiting Wives: Separation and reunion among army wives. [database] (Winter 1995) Armed Forces & Society 21, Issue 2.

[18] Heron, op. cit.

[19] What a world of despair lies behind the reporter's statement that 'Rescuers have given up all hope of finding the missing hiker/skier/aircraft/bodies in the rubble'. And what immense joy in the recovery of missing people after all hope has faded.
For example: the story of bushwalker Ben Moloney missing recently in the Tasmanian wilderness. Moloney was found after five weeks, long after the search had been called off, and after his grieving family had already held a memorial service for him. His family had, I suggest gone through an emotional test of endurance equal to Moloney's physical one.
For details see Darby, Andrew, Paul Heinrichs and David Adams. "The Man Who Came Back From the Dead: Bushwalkers extraordinary story of survival in the wilderness." The Age Quarterly 2001, 22 April 2001, p. 1.

enduring character in The Odyssey, pines for Odysseus's return her food reserves are constantly used up by a band of suitors who besiege her home.[20]

A potent contemporary example of this story comes from the artwork of Felix Gonzalez Torres. (Plate iii: fig. 8) The endless supply of candies he uses as a metaphor for the wasting body of his partner, Ross, suggests a sweetness others are invited to taste however fleetingly. For, like the artist, the viewer may look with only faint hope at how the 'ideal weight' or current weight of Ross's metaphoric body fluctuates, the small gains measured poignantly and seemingly inevitably against an incremental loss. [21]

ADJUSTMENT

As the length of Separation extends, the initial period of emotional confusion, typified by a sense of abandonment, loss, emptiness, pain and disorganisation gives way to a sense of adjustment.

The Woman Who Waits settles in for the long haul. She may now appear patient, and committed, the testing stories of her grief begin to shade into stories of endurance – having the "ability to withstand prolonged strain."[22] As Australian writer Henry Lawson says of the waiting woman known to us only as The Drover's Wife "She is used to being left alone. She once lived like this for eighteen months…"[23]

But her quietude may also include hardship, loneliness and isolation. As Virginia Neto points out in her conference paper Prison Visitors: A Profile:

> Over 60 percent of the visitors to San Quentin traveled 50 miles or less; over 80 percent of the Norco visitors traveled 150 miles or less - roughly two to three

[20] Homer. The Odyssey, translated by E. V. Rieu. Harmondsworth: Penguin, Reprint 1965. p. 38.

[21] Illustrated in Spector, Nancy. Felix Gonzalez -Torres. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1995. p. 151.

[22] Turner, op. cit. p. 341.

[23] Lawson, Henry. Henry Lawson, edited by Brian Kiernan. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976. p. 98.

> hours by car. In contrast, at Susanville, over half of the visitors traveled between 151 to 600 miles, and another 16 percent covered more than 600 miles. For example, an 80-year-old woman had spent 10 hours on a Greyhound bus in order to visit her son for a few hours… [24]

The United States military study I mentioned earlier suggests that the adjustment period may also be characterized by feelings of hope, confidence, calmness and diminished anger. It is a time when the Woman Who Waits may also begin to develop routines, strategies and interests that foster her wellbeing, and personal growth, the centredness of Hestia may begin to manifest. In my own experience, this included making a commitment to creating art.

The bifurcated time of the initial period of loss loses it dominance. The Woman Who Waits lives more in the present. She may feel a rekindling of the Hestian fires she thought were cold, and new amplitude within her daily store. She may "start to pay attention to the mundane or trivial things in life that…(she) previously rushed by…(To) *take time* to enjoy…surroundings, friends, family, meals, and quiet moments." [25]

Taking time to focus attention on close, intimate detail has the extraordinary effect of making time pass more quickly. The Woman Who Waits becomes in time, in the present, in what is referred to by the Greeks as *kairos* time. [26] In refocusing on what is near, Home may be redefined in her own terms. (Plate xx: fig. 40)

Indeed it may now appear that the Woman Who Waits is no longer waiting – her tears are shed in private, and her daily life has a new rhythm and centredness. She may need to go or return to work to survive. The visual clues characteristic of the earlier phase of separation, such as undirected or emotional lingering may give way to a more

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[24] Neto. op. cit. p. 2. of 8.

[25] Todd, Sandra. Spiritual Homelessness in Today's World. [Online] [c1998] last accessed 11/03/2000. Available at <http://www.mythic-consciousness.org/hestia.htm> p. 3 of 6, my italics.

[26] Bolen, op. cit. p. 111.

controlled introspection, a refocusing on personal and domestic tasks. My current research has a particular interest in this phase of Homecoming, and I will discuss my artistic responses to this experience in Chapter Three.

In Homer's epic The Odyssey, it was Penelope's tireless waiting – for nearly twenty years in the absence of any news of her missing husband, that made her name a byword for fidelity and patience. Proficiently working the loom, and I suspect partly lulled by its rhythm, (a movement of time through space), and by the need to focus, Penelope's weaving not only continues unabated, but becomes a device by which she defies the clamouring suitors who attempt to force her to remarry; prolongs her marriage to Odysseus and thereby ensures a Homecoming.

Penelope for all her suffering brings an imaginal approach to her problems. As Moore suggests:

> [T] here must be a vision of what is happening, deep ideas to create experience. Otherwise we have had the events without experiencing them, and the experience of what happened comes only later when we gain an idea of it – when it can be envisioned by an archetypal idea. [27]

Innocence gives way to initiated knowledge**.** Simple events take on mythic dimensions. Physical acting out, and literal depiction gives way to a view of the world that is imbued with a sense of psyche, spirit, myth, dream and portent.

While initially the Woman Who Waits may look for rescue, some miraculous denial of her plight, and adjustment may bring her new views, new openings – psychological windows and doorways of opportunity, the approach of Homecoming itself signals a change on the horizon. (Plate xxi: fig. 41)

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[27] Moore, op. cit. p. 54.

REUNION

The final stage of the Homecoming story is Reunion. Reunion too, is complicated. When Odysseus finally arrives back in Ithaca, he does not immediately rush to Penelope's side. His delay causes a series of events to unfold, which make perfect sense in the context of his long absence, and also within contemporary psychological studies.[28] In a sense Odysseus is home, but has not yet *come Home*. Significantly, it is not until after he has tested the loyalties of wife and her followers; defeated the suitors besieging his home and *their* followers, that he calls for the Hestia to be relit in his hall before revealing his presence to Penelope.[29]

Following a lengthy separation, the period prior to reunion may involve a reassessment of self and of the relationship. The oscillations between skepticism and hope become more defined.[30] The thought of sharing the steady focused light and warmth of the rekindled Hestia is comforting, but the flames contrast with the potentially tricky shadowiness reminiscent of Hermes.

It is a time of excitement: "Many wives…built up fantasies and idealized expectations, which were sometimes fed by increasingly passionate telephone calls and letters they were receiving and sending"[31] however, apprehension, high expectations of self and of the other, worry and fear are also typical.

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[28] See for example:
Absher, Tom. Men and the Goddess: Feminine archetypes in western literature. Rochester: Park Street Press, 1990;
Hillman, James. Facing the Gods. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988; Houston, Jean. The Hero and the Goddess: The Odyssey as mystery and initiation. London, N. Y.: The Aquarian Press, 1992; Murnaghan, Sheila. Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987.

[29] Homer, op, cit, p. 340.

[30] Hence the oscillations of emotion in my three-dimensional works, all completed within six weeks of each other.

[31] Wood, Suzanne and Jacquelyn Scarville. "Waiting Wives: Separation and reunion among army wives." in Armed Forces & Society. 21, Issue 2 [database] (Winter 1995) last accessed 21/01/2000.

Elements that once seemed blindingly simple become ambiguous. The path down which the returning Hero must come becomes hard to locate. Hermes in his role as Trickster God is everywhere. It may be literally and figuratively a testing time. Thus Odysseus observes and talks with Penelope whilst disguised, and in doing so "artificially creates a state of estrangement between them that simulates the genuine possibility of estrangement that is latent in marriage and is aggravated by separations such as they have just endured."[32]

The Hero, changed by the Journey and now seeking the solace of Home as embodied by the Woman Who Waits, may be confronted on the threshold of all he has idealised, by the realisation that she too has Journeyed and may now refuse to be that embodiment, or at least choose to recast it in her own terms.

So Penelope in turn tests Odysseus after he has cast off his disguise, with a statement designed to ascertain if he is truly her mate:

> "You too are strange," said the cautious Penelope…
> "I have too clear a picture of you in my mind as you were when you sailed from Ithaca in your long-oared ship. Come Eurycliea, make him a comfortable bed outside the bedroom that he built so well himself. Place the big bed out there, and make it up with rugs and blankets, and with laundered sheets.
> This was her way of putting her husband to the test…
> Penelope," he cried, "you exasperate me! Who, if you please, has moved my bed elsewhere? Short of a miracle, it would be hard even for a skilled workman to shift it somewhere else... For a great secret went into the making of that complicated bed…"[33]

The bed was carved from a living olive tree.

The Woman Who Has Waited has discovered the Hestian store within her. She has the deeply felt understanding that like the Hero, she too has a tale to tell. She has

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[32] Murnaghan, Sheila. Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 127.

[33] Homer, op. cit. p. 345.

journeyed as far as her male counterpart, not only surviving, but ultimately thriving. In losing her innocence she has gained wonder, and an openness to Mystery.

The sharing of personal stories that takes place between Penelope and Odysseus before retiring is therefore as much a part of the re-consummation of their relationship, as is their re-union within the marriage bed.[34] They are coming to know each other again, not only through carnal knowledge, but by their shared thoughts, feelings, experiences, hopes and fears – through the rekindling (quickening) of the sacred fire at the heart(h) of their marriage.

The Mystery of this union is celebrated in that most visible rite-of-passage – the marriage ceremony. A bride to be is also a Woman Who Waits and she is at once the embodiment of the past, the present and the future, of the deep interpersonal union (with its potential for separation[35] and re-union) between a couple, and also on some level of the 'Heiros Gamos' – the great soulful Mystery of the marriage of the gods made flesh. (Plate xxiii: fig. 45)

But at the moment of re-union the Woman Who Waits – whether she is to be married or not partakes of this sense of the archetypal bride. Ric Throssell, son of writer Katharine Susanna Pritchard tells of his return home from the war:

> Somehow she had heard there was a train expected from Brisbane.
> Katharine had worn a coat the colour of spring wattle so that I should not miss her. She stood in the centre of the platform near the barrier, searching the … faces of men in khaki and jungle green, who streamed towards her.[36]

Dressed in the golden raiment of Aphrodite, the Goddess associated with Spring, Love and Beauty; Katharine, in this passage, is as much a bride as any white clad girl going to

[34] See Moore, Thomas. The Soul of Sex: Cultivating life as an act of love. New York: Harper Collins, 1999, pp. 210 –216, for an expansion on the role of this and other 'holy' beds.

[35] Including the ultimate separation – death.

[36] Throssell, Ric. 'A Soldier Returns.' In The White Chrysanthemum: Changing Images of Australian Motherhood edited by Nancy Keesing. London: Angus & Robertson, 1977. p. 92.

a wedding. For me therefore the image of the Bride as such provides a potent image to express the reunion within Homecoming.

Coming Home does not end here with “And they lived happily ever after” no matter how comforting that thought might be. Nor does it create the certainty that the Journeyman will remain at home, or the Woman Who Waits will wait no more. Hermes is always present in the heart of the Home, but the potential for Hestia and Homecoming is always present too in Hermes.

Homecoming is, however, rich with both memory and possibility, and offers the potential of an encompassing (Hestia) and ongoing (Hermes) awareness that allows for a new generosity and complexity of living, the invisible, nurturing gift of the hearthflame.

CHAPTER THREE: THE ART OF HOMECOMING

"Unlike the fully expressive… word, the art work stands before us as an initially mute presence; it is perceived, beheld, not articulated or spoken by us; we are beholden to it, not it to us." [1]

Edward Casey

PICTURING THE WOMAN WHO WAITS

Throughout my undergraduate years I was preoccupied with representing my emotional response to separation. My Honours research enabled me to articulate these and what I can now identify as other Homecoming experiences and their concomitant pictorial response with an increasingly critical eye.

Although the Woman Who Waits is, with hindsight, visible in earlier self-portraiture, narrative figuration and metaphoric still lives, it was not until I commenced my Masters research project, that my understanding crystallized sufficiently to perceive her as an identifiable figure, and to define her position as a key image within the art of Homecoming.

I therefore returned to the aforementioned familiar forms of visual expression with new enthusiasm and insight throughout the duration of my Masters thesis. As well as exploring self-portraiture, narrative figuration and metaphoric still lives in much greater depth, I have also depicted the figure in the landscape, along with surrealistic three-dimensional artworks.

I began with figurative works that told stories of fragile feelings of homecoming within my new environment (Plate xv: fig. 31) and the uncertainties surrounding my personal and artistic future (Plate xix: fig. 38; plate xxiii: 44). I returned to this form of expression, or to self-portraiture when circumstances threatened my security (Slides 12, 13) or when I was uncertain of a future direction. (Plate xiii: fig. 29) The initial time of questioning then led on to the shadowy psychological landscapes of Duet for One.

[1] Casey, Edward. S. Spirit and Soul: Essays in Philosophical Psychology. Dallas: Spring Publications, Inc.1991. p. 211.

(Plate xvi: fig. 32; plate xix: figs. 37, 38; plate xx: fig. 40; plate xxiv: fig. 46; plate xxv: fig. 48. Slides 1 - 4)

As the need to ground and retouch the everyday world became pressing along with a desire for the celebration of personal gains and broader vistas, the metaphoric still life series Still On the Line (Plate xiv: fig. 30; plate xxi: figs. 41, 42; plate xxvi: fig. 50. Slides 5 - 11), was created, followed by the figurative Bridal Sweet. (Plate xviii: fig. 35; plate xx: fig. 39; plate xxiii: fig. 45; plate xxiv: fig. 47. Slides 14 - 16)

A bursting need for colour, movement, tactility and a mode of expressing the conflicting emotions of the Woman Who Waits resulted in the assemblages Containing Emotions, (Plate xvi: fig. 33; plate xxii: fig. 43; plate xxviii: figs. 52, 53. Slides 17, 18, 19) and it was with a calmer heart and a sense of personal detachment and kinship with others I began On Hand, (Frontispiece, Plate xvii: fig. 34; plate xviii: fig. 36; plate xxvii: fig. 51. Slides 20, 21) a series I regard as a hybrid between figuration and still life, because of the degree of attentive looking involved and the stillness of the depicted hands.

The final drawing of my research project, Banquet of Life, captures the quiet, shared joy of reunion.

Meanwhile throughout my academic research I discovered a number of paintings by other artists that were clearly concerned with the tensions of the Homecoming moments of parting and return. [2]

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[2] See for example:

Albert, Hermann. Die Heimkehr, 1984, Collection Meister, Braunschweig. Illustrated in Krens, Thomas. et al. Refigured Painting: The German Image 1960-88. p. 153. Munich: Prestel-Verlag in conjunction with the Solomon R Guggenheim Foundation, 1989;

Gelay, Edouard, The Homecoming, n.d., Capodimonte Museum, Naples. Illustrated in Perrot, Michelle. “From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War” in A History of Private Life edited by Philippe Aries and Georges Duby. Cambridge Mass. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990.

Whilst these were of interest to me as an essential part of the overall story, their focus upon the central heroic wayfarer was not what I sought. I tried also to avoid the theatrical Heroines and romanticised women of the harem idealised in various Neoclassical and Victorian paintings, although I was sharply aware of Penelope's presence among these works.[3] Nor was I seeking portraiture.

Therefore I initially sought images of women absorbed in what they were doing, since it seemed likely that some of these paintings would also depict waiting, adjustment and anticipation of return. I took note of posture, body language and environment. Whilst many dealt with an external relationship, there were others that seemed to offer insight into a spiritual or psychological Homecoming. However images such as this were abundant and the difficulty arose of how to read them, without reading too much or the wrong message into them.

I found a clear example in the elderly woman who embodies a world of waiting, resignation and exhaustion in Noel Counihan's clearly titled work The Waiting Room, (Plate iv. fig. 9)[4] along with the rural and outback women of Australia depicted in the paintings of Russell Drysdale. Drysdale's women, such as The Drovers Wife (Plate iv: fig. 10)[5] appear to have a sense of lonely waiting that borders on resignation and lethargy, but also a muted confidence that comes with overcoming the emotional storms

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[3] See for example those illustrated in:
Hobson, Anthony. J. W. Waterhouse. London: Phaidon, 1992;
Nunn, Pamela Gerrish. Problem Pictures: Women and men in Victorian painting. Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1995;
Perrot, op. cit.

[4] Illustrated in McKenzie, Janet. Noel Counihan. Kenthurst, N.S.W.: Kangaroo Press, 1986, p. 12.

[5] Illustrated in Klepac, Lou. The life and work of Russell Drysdale. Sydney: Murdoch, c.1983, Revised edition, 1996, plate 71, p. 258.

of waiting, and getting on with daily life.[6]

Because of their class and rural lifestyle, Drysdale's women are shown engaging in physical rather than domestic activities, and their isolation is starkly depicted. However, their psychological counterparts can be found in numerous scenes of women engaged in routine domestic chores such as those depicted in Fred McCubbin's Shelling Peas (Plate v: fig. 11)[7], Clara Southern's An old bee farm[8] or Vida Lahey's Busy Fingers[9].

For patience and waiting may be invoked by the presence of particular domestic items such as cooking, weaving, embroidery and knitting, but props such as these are ambiguous since they might also be emblematic of other ideas centering on the 'proper' use of women's time.[10] Further information was needed.

An understanding of history and social issues sheds light on Tom Roberts, Twenty minutes past three,[11] Frederick McCubbin's Home Again [12]and Grace Cossington Smith's The Sock Knitter (Plate v: fig. 12)[13]

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[6] Nunn makes the point in Problem Pictures: Women and Men in Victorian Painting, (ibid p. 54) concerning the depiction of waiting wives in Victorian painting that "Because of her presumed incompleteness as a single person, a picture of a woman could easily imply a man, conspicuous by his absence." This remark might well apply to some of these works by Drysdale. Although because of their class and rural lifestyle, Drysdale's women are shown engaging in physical rather than domestic activities the title makes the implication clear.

[7] Illustrated in Australian Painters of the Heidelberg School: The Jack Manton Collection. Notes on the collection by Jack Manton, introduced by Patrick McCaughey. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1979: plate 29, p. 75.

[8] Southern, Clara. "The old bee farm" c. 1900. Oil on canvas, 69.1 x 112.4 cm. National Gallery of Victoria. Reproduced as a postcard, National Gallery of Victoria.

[9] Lahey, Vida. "Busy Fingers" 1913. Oil on canvas 50 x 40 cm George Melsom collection. Illustrated in Seear, Lynne. "'Strapped to the Mangle': Art, Work and the 'Lady' Artist in Seear, Lynne & Julie Ewington. Brought to Light: Australian art 1850 –1965: from the Queensland Art Gallery collection. South Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1998, p. 115.

[10] See for example the following article: Seear, Lynne. "'Strapped to the Mangle': Art, Work and the 'Lady' Artist." In Brought to Light: Australian art 1850 –1965: from the Queensland Art Gallery collection edited by Lynne Seear & Julie Ewington. South Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1998, pp. 112 -115.

[11] Illustrated in Australian Painters of the Heidelberg School: The Jack Manton Collection. Notes on the

"What Madge thinks as she knits her socks we have no idea... Yet to paint a woman knitting socks in 1915 meant only one thing, and that one thing was the war…" states Drusilla Modjeska.[14] And war not only creates Women Who Wait, but greatly reduces the chance of successful homecoming.

As this brief discussion shows the images I found most interesting and pertinent to my own understanding of the Woman Who Waits were – perhaps unsurprisingly, those created by Australian artists.

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collection by Jack Manton, introduced by Patrick McCaughey. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1979: p. 27. Twenty minutes past three depicts domestic tensions between a waiting wife and an erring husband, but may also be a commentary on the social problems of the times such as drinking, gambling and womanizing.

[12] Illustrated in Galbally, Ann. Frederick McCubbin Melbourne: Hutchinson 1981: plate 2. p. 41.

[13] Illustrated in James, Bruce Grace Cossington Smith Roseville: Crafstman House, 1990: plate 4, p. 31.

[14] Cossington Smith, Grace. The Sock Knitter, 1915, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, oil on canvas, 61.6 x 50.7 cm. Illustrated in Modjeska, Drusilla. "A singular Portrait: Grace Cossington Smith *Portrait of a man"* p. 122, in Brought to Light: Australian art 1850 –1965: from the Queensland Art Gallery collection, edited by Lynne Seear & Julie Ewington. South Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1998, pp. 120 -123.

Plate iv 

Plate v 

BRIAN DUNLOP'S PENELOPE

"Ah, it is hard but not beyond endurance, when sick at heart one weeps the whole day long but is possessed by sleep at night… This very night again {in dreams] I thought I saw Odysseus by me in the bed, looking exactly as he looked when he sailed away with the fleet; and my heart leapt up, since I took it for no dream but actual fact…"

Homer

[15]

Reproductions of a number of contemporary paintings by Australian artist Brian Dunlop were already known and greatly enjoyed by me via Lynne Strachan's book Brian Dunlop.[16] Dunlop's interiors, sleepy nightie-clad women and still lives including drapery and chairs, were paintings I enjoyed long before I embarked on this Masters research project.

I was engaged in exploring the possibilities of representing the view of the Woman Who Waits from behind when I came across an article written by Brian Dunlop for a magazine. The article included images of a series of paintings made at his home 'Eumeralla' near Port Fairy. [17]

Many of these works have a recurring theme: "Penelope… constantly looking out to sea anxiously hoping for the return of her long-absent husband Odysseus."[18]

These paintings were and are of particular interest to me for the manner in which they suggest the thoughts and emotions of this particular Woman Who Waits.

In The Nearer Shore, (Plate vi: fig. 13)[19] Penelope, standing on the boundary of sea and land is visually and I suggest emotionally off-center, her stillness and apparent

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[15] Homer. The Odyssey, translated by E. V. Rieu. Harmondsworth: Penguin, Reprint 1965, p. 306.

[16] Strahan, Lynne. Brian Dunlop. North Ryde: Craftsman House, 1999.

[17] Dunlop, Brian. "Brian Dunlop's Poetry of Painting" in Australian Artist, 158, 14, no. 2 (August 1997): 52 – 59.

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[18] ibid. p. 54. Dunlop's figures reflect his interest in Jungian ideas. The female figure is a symbol of Dunlop's *anima*, - his feminine perspective or personality. Also see Edquist, Harriet. "Brian Dunlop: Observations on the Australian interior" in Art & Australia 36, no.3 (January – March, 1999): 364 –371 and Strachan, loc cit; for expansions on these ideas.

calm ruffled by the action of the wind through her clothing, the white capped waves before her. She holds a small rock – a piece of solidity in an ever changing environment. This is not a woman at home (with herself) but someone drawn again and again to the liminal spaces of Hermes.

But Home still frames her experience as we see in Eumerella, The Wave (Plate vi: fig. 14)[20] Penelope in this instance is a marginal figure occupying a narrow strip of beach. Like Hestia she is barely visible, the interior of her Home dominates our view, although our eyes are drawn to the view she seeks and it is only after contemplation that we see the woman herself.

In On the Cliff 1 and On the Cliff 2, (Plate vi: fig. 15) [21] day has lengthened and the brilliance of the landscape begun to shade into dusk. Penelope stands once again on the cliff top, braced against the chilly turbulence of wind and waves, her shawl, a defence of her own making, wrapped around her body. Despite the agitation of her surroundings – perhaps indicative of her emotional state, she stands steadfast and vigilant facing the horizon.

The view Penelope faces assumes equal and sometimes greater importance than her stalwart figure, for it harbors the path down which the wayfarer may come. Changes of scale between the figure of the Woman Who Waits and her environment are an important means of achieving the implied tensions within Dunlop's paintings and also within my own work.

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[19] Illustrated in Dunlop, Brian. "Brian Dunlop's Poetry of Painting," p. 52. In Australian Artist, 158, 14, no. 2 (August 1997): 52.

[20] ibid, p. 55.

[21] ibid, pp. 56, 57.

Plate vi 

A VIEW FROM BEHIND

Although Penelope could be an unnamed and unknown woman idly admiring the panorama before her, there is an air of purpose, isolation and possibility in these paintings. This awareness of a mystery unfolding is what I aim to achieve in my own works.

In presenting the viewer with her back we are excluded from the concerns of the Woman Who Waits, yet paradoxically drawn in. Being (like Hestia) no-one whose features are known, she can be a metaphor not just for Penelope but for every or any Woman Who Waits including myself. Invited to slip into the metaphorical shoes of the mysteriously waiting woman, and look out at the world with her eyes, the observer may find possible answers in the depicted view, but may also, like The Woman Who Waits, be left with unanswered questions, and conjecture.[22]

This is implicit in Dunlop's Rainbow and cloud (Plate vi: fig. 16) [23] in which Penelope has returned to her home. She gazes out through the familiar windows toward the familiar view. Centred in the framing windows, centrally in view and I suggest centred within, she stands indomitably, even a little impatiently, looking out at a sky that contains both clouds and a rainbow. Penelope has a solid presence in this work. She has withdrawn to the sanctuary of her home and is observing both the tumult of the elements and the possibilities for her future writ large in the sky, with a dispassionate gaze.

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[22] Glimpsing a woman's back as she stands at a boundary looking out also evokes an historical empathy with my female forebears: My mother June who waited for my father throughout the Second World War, and many times thereafter. My maternal grandmother Florence who emigrated from England after the First World War and bought up three daughters whilst her husband was away working. Ruby, my paternal grandmother had a husband in the merchant navy, brought up children during the Depression, and watched her son, my father go to war for four years. Ruby also endured the uncertainties of a lengthy stay in a tuberculosis sanitorium whilst my father was a baby. My maternal great grandmother Clara broke boundaries as a suffragette, whilst Emma laid out the dead and assisted her poorer neighbours.

[23] Illustrated in Edquist, op. cit. p. 371.

Making choices about her future from a position of strength is an important part in the personal growth of the Woman Who Waits. Like the woman in my own drawings in Bridal Sweet, the future may be veiled, the decisions difficult, but once the choices have been made, the Woman Who Waits can move on psychologically, and a new calm and confidence enable her to prepare for her future. (Plate xxiii: fig. 45)

Perhaps in facing away from one choice The Woman Who Waits chooses to face and face up to, a more complex interaction. So Penelope's decision to eschew the many possibilities of marriage to a new and eager suitor, allowed the more difficult yet soulful reunion with its long uncertain wait.

Yet as we know from Penelope's story, and can imply from images like the kneeling women in Anne Wallace's St Lucia Reach (Plate vii: fig. 17)[24] and Paula Rego's Target (Plate vii: fig. 18)[25] that although this is a choice – an action laden with surrender, faith, hope and trust; it also brings vulnerability and exposure. [26] Whatever the outcomes for The Woman Who Waits these are clearly choices that take her far from her comfort zone, her 'homely home' and into the shadowed borderlines of the uncanny and unfamiliar.

[24] Illustrated in Butler, Rex. "Anne Wallace's Confessions" in Art & Australia 32, No 3. Women (Autumn 1995): pp 390 – 395, p. 395.

[25] Illustrated in Tate Gallery. Paula Rego. London: Tate Gallery, 1997, p. 99.

[26] For example it has been suggested that Caspar David Friedrich's painting, Woman at the Window 1822, Berlin (west) Nationalgalerie, is symbolic of the desire for death over life: Borsch-Supar, Helmut. Caspar David Friedrich, London: Thames & Hudson, 1973, p. 128 – 9.

Plate vii 

DISGUISES

There are further ambiguities in the facelessness of this woman, since she is able to disguise not only who she is, but also what she is feeling. And while it is possible to read all manner of emotions into the postures of her back, it is the expressiveness or impassiveness of a face that people are most schooled in reading, to which we habitually turn for verification of bodily gesture.

There is an odd verity too, in clothing and costume. Garments are frequently codified and viewed as indicators of matters as divergent as social status, gender, occupation and life-style[27]. So too, there are the overstated, overemphasized and over-the-top clothes denoting carnivale and celebration. Party clothes. Costume. Masquerade.

Clothing in many forms has been a hallmark of my own work since Undergraduate days. I enjoy describing surface, especially fabric. This has its genesis in a childhood rich with the 'stuffs' and accoutrements of the trade of my dressmaker mother, who developed a love of cloth and 'notions' that has been a given throughout my life. It has been a great delight in recent years to collect an array of vintage clothing from the eras surrounding my childhood, to depict many of these items, and to 'imprison' my (not unwilling) mother for days on end to impart some her extensive knowledge on their fabric, construction and social history. This simple interaction has therefore become a part of my returning to centre. It has also allowed me to draw my daughter and friends in and reach out to other unknown older women who have gladly answered my inquiries as I find some treasure or other in opportunity shops all over the

[27] See for example: Crane, Diana. Fashion and its social agendas: class, gender, and identity in clothing. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c 2000;
Lurie, Alison. The Language of Clothes. London: Bloomsbury, 1992;
Weiner, Annette B. & Jane Schneider. Cloth and human experience. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, c 1989.

state. Further, I have begun to wear some costumes when working as a life model, and this is directly responsible for the costume in Bridal Sweet.

Three items in particular predominate the current works, demarking changes in the Homecoming experience: slips, a ‘celebration dress’, and a hybrid costume consisting of a corset, full skirted petticoats and a wispy head covering that is reminiscent of bridal wear, communion and childhood Sunday best.

Plate viii

Fig. 19. Julie Heron (She Once Was a) Slip of a Girl (detail)
1998
Collection of the artist
charcoal on Fontenay
54 x 150 cm

DUET FOR ONE

The undergarments of Duet for One are direct descendants of the slip depicted in (She Once was a) Slip of a Girl (Plate viii: fig. 19) This drawing from 1998, expresses my depressed feelings concerning the deterioration created by aging, and "hanging around" waiting for something to happen. The slip was drawn suspended on an elaborate coathanger, the precursor of its present plainer cousins - of which, more later.

While slips are items of clothing I presently wear, they also occupy a seductive threshold between dress and undress – suggestive of future Homecoming delights, and that most intimate Hestian space – the bedroom. However, as we saw earlier, Hermes is able to penetrate even this most private arena and so we also use the word slip (like its counterpart "shift"), to denote a quality of duplicity, of slip-periness and accidental Tricksterish disclosure of intimate thoughts and feelings – the "Freudian slip".

This is a garment that encapsulates neatly my feeling of being between states, of vulnerability and of dual allegiances. (Plate xxiv: fig. 46) Wearing such an intimate piece of clothing outdoors – is a challenge to the world and the self, bordering on indecency since it risks and courts exposure. But far from feigning comfort, it may proclaim new territory wherein we feel at home.

Plate ix 

BRIDAL SWEET

These implications are taken a step further in the petticoat costume of Bridal Sweet. In a very real sense it is a memorial garment, since it brings back memories of Sundays – family days and of wearing my Sunday-best; memories of gathering flowers (from other people's gardens) to give to my mother, memories of reading Alice in Wonderland[28] with John Tenniels wonderful illustrations, memories of my primary school drawings of the back view of a little girl holding flowers for her mother; memories, in short, of childhood and home. (Plate xxiv: fig. 47) But memory is the experience of life through the veil of time and experience. And so this costume replaces girlhood with bridal finery and its attendant memories good and bad – of adult relationships, promises and commitments made and broken, a reminder of the fulfillment and the demise of girlhood dreams. In the midst of life we are in death. And so I come circling back to Hermes, to memoria, paradox and mystery, and to the relinquishing of a single life as bridegeld for Homecoming, celebration, re-union and relationship.

While knowledge of her future is, as I suggested in the previous chapter still shrouded in mystery, this is no passive victim like Rego's Bride, (Plate ix: fig. 20)[29] celestial figure like Juan Gonzales A Bride for Lorca (Plate ix: fig. 21)[30] nor the "commodified sign of femininity" and "symbolic form of female sexuality…" [31]of Kristin Headlam's Public Park series, (Plate ix: fig. 22)[32] but a determined and sensual

[28] Carroll, Lewis. The Complete Stories of Lewis Carroll. Sydney: The Book Company, 1994.

[29] Illustrated in Tate Gallery. Paula Rego. London: Tate Gallery, 1997, p. 93.

[30] Illustrated in McManus, Irene. Dreamscapes: The Art of Juan Gonzalez. New York: Hudson Hills Press, First edition, 1994, p.177.

[31] Marsh, Anne. Public Park: a gendered performance in Art and Australia Vol. 36, No. 4. June 1999, p. 499.

woman, indicating her willingness for reunion, despite her past experiences and present concerns, and indeed impatient of delays.

The state of mind of the bride in my own work is indicated through her dress and surroundings but also through her implied behavior. Such behaviour walks the tightrope boundaries between reality and theatre, for whilst on the whole the figures in these paintings eschew outright drama or melodrama, their behavior contains a wealth of potentially theatrical gesture held (barely) under restraint.

[32] ibid.

Plate x 

METAPHORS OF PRESENCE AND ABSENCE

I will turn now to the manner in which ambiguous images – simultaneously suggestive of both presence and absence may further understanding of the art of Homecoming.

While it is not clear whether the presence of a half knitted sock in Josephine Muntz-Adams painting, Care (Plate x: fig. 23.)[33] has a similar meaning to Cossington Smith's The Sock Knitter, it seems the lone elderly woman pictured is one who waits. This is indicated by a combination of the paintings title, her patient but melancholy facial expression, and most importantly, the presence of a letter, denoting so clearly the absence of its sender.

Letters bring the presence of the absent one *to hand*. Therefore they simultaneously embody interior space (home), exterior space (the wayfarer) and the tricksterish transitional and transactional boundary spaces. Tricksterish because even with the best of intentions letters may complicate, muddy or clarify relationships, they are subject to the vagaries of the postal system and may be lost, sent astray, delivered to the wrong hands, or not delivered at all[34].

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[33] Seear, Lynne & Julie Ewington. Brought to Light: Australian art 1850 –1965: from the Queensland Art Gallery collection. South Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1998, p. 13.

[34] For a variety of discussions regarding use and importance of the letter to both relationships and art see:
Alpers, Svetlana. The art of describing: Dutch art in the seventeenth century. London: Penguin, 1989, pp. 192 – 207;
Davis, op. cit.;
Nunn, Pamela Gerrish. Problem Pictures: Women and Men in Victorian Painting. Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1995, pp 129 – 131;
Moore, Thomas. Soulmates: Honouring the Mysteries of Love and Relationship. New York: Harper/Collins, 1994, pp. 124 – 133.

They may be "At once personal and private…[They] can transcend time and place and the particulars of a relationship to express that universal longing that we all have for the intimacy of the shared moment."[35]

As a Waiting Woman, letters played a considerable part in my own life. Moreover my entire thesis may be considered as an ongoing letter to myself, my Wayfarer, other Women Who Wait, and finally to those who view the works.

Throughout my research the 'messages' I sometimes received from individual works on completion, were not what I thought I had 'sent', and as such played an important role in uncovering my own hidden emotions. It is therefore with some interest I look forward to receiving 'replies' to my visual messages - new readings of the work at hand.

Historically the actual depiction of letters is ambiguous and secretive. As the Woman Who Waits reads, the viewer is rarely granted a view of the letter's contents, nor can we directly know her feelings. Rather we must read her and her surroundings searching for clues as to the import of the letter.

Svetlana Alpers considers the painted letter in seventeenth century Dutch art was used partly "…because of its ability to close distances, to make something present, to communicate secretly…"[36] It is no co-incidence that a primary role of Hermes – that shadowy penetrator of intimate Hestian spaces, was that of messenger.

The waiting woman in Vermeer's painting Interior With a Lady Reading a Letter (Plate x: fig. 24)[37] is eloquent in her reading. Her attention is utterly focused on the letter held under knuckled tension between her hands. And behind her figure, in that

[35] Thompson, John. (ed) Of Love and Friendship. Woden, ACT: Molongo Press, 1998, p. 3.

[36] Alpers op.cit. p. 200.

[37] Illustrated in Wright, Christopher. The Dutch Painters: 100 Seventeenth Century Masters. London: Orbis Publishing, 1978, p. 202.

telling interior marked by the presence of two chairs, is a map. While letters, maps and ships may have other national or allegorical meanings including clues to the progress of a love affair in seventeenth century Dutch and English Victorian genre paintings, their appearance in these works surely reminds of actual menfolk on journeys from which their return was by no means certain.

Earlier I alluded to my parents' wartime courtship by letter, but the tradition is not dead even with today's communication systems. While families of U.S. servicemen seconded to the Middle East during the Gulf War used modern technology to remain in touch with their absent partners: "(many) women wrote daily, and on average their husbands responded two or three times a week."

Although the letter in its Victorian sense is not a common motif in art today, it appears in my series On Hand, and also forms part of the underlying surface in Containing Emotions.

Hermes is present however, in many forms and we may find him in contemporary images such as Jeffrey Smart's The Listeners, (Plate xi: fig. 25)[38] in the wires that criss-cross the landscape in David Keeling's Lines West (Plate xi: fig. 26)[39] as well as in a number of my own works including Two for Joy. (Plate xxv: fig. 48) In preparation for this and other similar works I spent one glorious day driving around the countryside near my home, making sketches of the surprisingly varied configurations of power poles. (Plate xxv: fig. 49)

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[38] Illustrated in Capon, Edmund. Jeffrey Smart Retrospective. Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales; London: Thames & Hudson, 2000, plate 24, p. 102.

[39] Illustrated in Murray Cree, Laura and Neville Drury. eds. Australian Painting Now. North Ryde, Sydney: Craftsman House, 2000. n.p.

Plate xi

STILL ON THE LINE

The concurrence of presence and absence can be seen in varying degrees throughout my thesis, with its most blatant expression found in the images of coathangers from the 2001 series Still on the Line.

Coathangers – like Hestia, are so ordinary, so prevalent in modern society as to appear invisible. They are found at once in the public sphere – in shops selling clothing and laundries cleaning clothing, in the wayfarers transitory space – the motel closet, and in the darkest (most invisible) innermost recesses of our homes. In this context they exist to display or store those most obvious markers of presence, the clothes by which we indicate to the world and ourselves who and what we are. (Plate xxvi, fig. 50)

They are also markers of relationship, as our solitary hangers are teamed up with the hangers of another, along with toothbrushes, favorite coffee cups and CD's. But unlike the other items, modern wire hangers are so common, so cheap, so 'impersonally personal' they are easily left behind.

In the moment of abandonment the hanger may undergo a transformation and a transcendence of its common form becoming in some way symbolic of the person who has left it behind. And therefore the emptiness of an abandoned coat hanger may tell profound, poignant and even archetypal stories of loss and absence.

For the Woman Who Waits the hanger may take on further resonances as she moves through the Homecoming journey. The hanger may revert to an impersonal presence or may become hers during periods of adjustment, however as the time of re-union draws near it may also serve as an image of the future. Whilst still contained in the emptiness of the wardrobe the hangers may become repositories for hope, clothed with images of homecoming.

In the Introduction I discussed possible imaginal readings of the chair that appears frequently in my work; to this reading I would like to add another possible story. It relates to the absent yet continual presence of the Wayfarer that is so strongly and constantly felt, it becomes, like the hanger, an everyday, yet invisible occupant of the home. In the psychological struggle between Home and Unheim, images such as these outline a ghostly presence.

However, presence and absence are not only communicated through isolated images but through the complexities of the entire picture, and it is to this I will now turn.

SHIFTING BOUNDARIES/MULTIPLE VIEWS

I have discussed at length the psychological emphasis of my work, as well as the metaphoric composite of image, soul and physical experience found within the figure of the Woman Who Waits, relating her presence in my drawings to various historical artworks and to Brian Dunlop's paintings of Penelope.

Dunlop's paintings not only provided me with a modern visual interpretation of The Woman Who Waits, but they closed the circle in returning to the ancient Greek stories, and psychological or mythic thinking. For although his works are realist in their depiction of detail they are also permeated with a sense of psychological drama and mystery; a combination that appeals strongly to me.

While obviously not works that hearken back to early myth, the paintings of Jeffrey Smart also have a pronounced mythic quality. "Almost everything in Smart's paintings is familiar and plausible, but… he makes us see these things as we have never seen them before…" writes John Macdonald; "He has drawn on the spirit of the classical world but not the actual forms…"[40]

[40] Smart, Jeffrey and John McDonald. Jeffrey Smart: paintings of the '70's and '80's. Roseville, N.S.W., Craftsman House, 1990. pp. 10, 21.

The strange and puzzling worlds present in the paintings of Dunlop and Smart are manifestly different, and yet they partake of a familiar paradox. In the former we are in the traditional domain of Hestia, a domain marked by penetration of the ambivalent world of Hermes, whilst in the latter we walk through Hermetic roads leading always to new horizons, a world where Smart is 'at home', but the viewer is often jarred into a recognition of Unheim. If narrative is present, then it is not as a simple or straightforward story, and perhaps indeed not any one story, but ambiguous relations of presence and absence. [41] There is a feeling in these paintings of an old saying "there's more going on here than meets the eye', referring to a subtle something in the air that alerts us to the presence of mystery or strangeness. The calm before the storm, the sudden silencing of the hum of living creatures sensing something uncanny or dangerous, the urgent but seemingly irrational need to hold ones breath – a sense that the 'angelos'[42] Hermes has paused and hovers just outside our knowing, that invisible Hestia has quickened, denote a sudden shading from the known into the unknown, a crossing of a boundary.

The subtle disjunctions and boundaries where Hestia meets and relates to the Hermetic qualities of ambivalence, duplicity, paradox or dissembling are also a major feature of my own work finding their most overt expressions in Duet for One, Still on the Line and Bridal Sweet.

Throughout my research I have also sought out this ambience and learnt from works by other twentieth century and contemporary artists such as Leonora Carrington,

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[41] Smart denies this. See Capon, Edmund. " Still, Silent, Composed: The art of Jeffrey Smart." 12 – 2. In Jeffrey Smart Retrospective edited by Edmond Capon. Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales; London: Thames & Hudson, 2000: p. 90.

[42] Hermes in his role as messenger was addressed as such. Benvenuto, Sergio. "Hermes-Hestia: The hearth and the angel as a philosophical paradigm." p. 101 in Telos 96 (Summer 1993): 101 - 119.

Julia Cicceroni, Maryanne Coutts, Juan Gonzalez, Kristen Headlam, Edward Hopper, David Keeling, Paula Rego, Dorothea Tanning, Anne Wallace, Andrew Wyeth and Salvatore Zofrea. The 'uncanny boundaries' within all these works – including my own, are sufficiently 'outlandish' to notice their presence, subtle enough for the viewer to question what it is they are experiencing, and enticing and mysterious enough to return for a deeper look.

CONTAINING EMOTIONS

This need to make some sort of sense of the puzzle of life, the constant questioning of the Woman Who Waits, a desire to be the one who contains, rather than the one who is contained, and also a hankering for play and colour are expressed in the assemblages Containing Emotions created in mid 2001. Hestia's urge to preserve, encase and focus, the Hermetic delight in ambiguous communications, lucky finds and permeable boundaries along with my own intensely felt need to stabilize and order a jumble of emotions are all manifest in these works.

Feelings of failed hope and the impingement of the polis and scientific rationalism (Plate xxviii: fig. 52; slide 17) on the life of the Woman Who Waits are in counterpoint to the splendour of bridal imagery, sensuality and abundance (Plate xvi, fig. 33; plate xxii, fig. 43; slide 18). The bridal veil – cobwebby, crumpled, and opaque becomes a background feature to games of chance and uncertain prayer in the images of games and prayerful icons. (Plate xxviii: fig. 53; slide 19)

These boxes have their genesis in a lifetime habit of collecting and displaying fragments and oddments I have found – a Hermetic habit I should add, that is entirely the fault of my father – a man who saw possibilities, who loved secondhand shops, tips, and unexpected gifts as much as I do. They reflect psychological acts of bricolage that

are integral to the manner in which I make sense of life and also produce any work of art. In addition they owe a good deal to the pioneering works of Joseph Cornell, to Dada and the Surrealists, and to the contemporary works of Australian artists Isobel Davies, Inga Hunter and Wendy Stavrianos as well as New Zealand artist Dale Copeland.

ON HAND

My thesis works are not only reflective of the shifting boundaries between Hestia and Hermes, Home and Unheim, or the shuffling of emotions, they also refer to the vagaries of time and circumstance. They circle around the central focus – Homecoming, as experienced by the Woman Who Waits, offering a multiplicity of insights rather than following a linear sequence.

This is made particularly clear with regard to the works that make up the series On Hand. Each drawing is complete in itself, yet collectively they may be hung and viewed in any order or configuration, each one standing for the other in the larger scheme of things. The Woman Who Waits is an individual with her own struggle and her own means of dealing with it, yet she is also part of a large, fluctuating, generally anonymous (faceless) group. On Hand is also a reminder that although reunion may have occurred within my own life, the experience of other women's waiting may well be ongoing.

Interconnected by visual, social and psychological similarities, the individual stories these hands tell become greater than the sum of the parts, thus invoking the archetype. (frontispiece; plate xvii, fig. 34)

On Hand is accordingly intended as a work that has the potential for indefinite expansion. It already includes images of the hands of women from outside Australia, and is inclusive of various lifestyles and ages.

I hope to reach and touch people who may not have ready access to or indeed interest in art. In turn, photographing and drawing these hands has presented me with numerous soulful stories that would otherwise remain untold.

On Hand is created with the intent of display in mundane situations where women may have reason to wait, rather than in dedicated gallery spaces. Potential hanging spaces include hospital and medical waiting rooms, stations, prison visit centres and women's prisons, various community and government agencies, cafes, hairdressers and beauty parlors and also private homes. Pieces may be hung in series or individually, and whilst on display may at times be accessible to only a limited viewing audience, thus evoking the private nature of much of women's waiting. Works are also easily sent interstate or overseas, or indeed made visible on the Internet, and that too is my intention.

BANQUET OF LIFE

A banquet or celebratory feast is a traditional means of celebrating Homecomings. In the Bible, the return of the Prodigal son was celebrated by the killing of the fatted calf. Banquets were and are given to celebrate the victorious return of heroes and other momentous occasions such as engagements, weddings, anniversaries and special birthdays. These momentous occasions may at times be occasions of sadness and isolation for the Woman Who Waits. She may feel like a 'waitress at the banquet of life':[43] an adjunct, invisible, unsuccessful and impoverished, even in the midst of plenty. Food, like life, may lose its savour. Banqueting "stuffs" may then take on powerful overtones of memento mori, echoing the admonishments of the seventeenth century Dutch still lives.

[43] Midler, Bette. "Concert Monologue", track 3, side 1 on The Rose a Marvin Worth/ Aaron Russo Production, produced and arranged by Paul A.Rothchild 1978.

On the other hand, when the celebration is hers, when the hand of love prepares it, the simplest food may become imbued with feelings of re-union, warmth, joy and love.

INVOKING TECHNE [44]

When creating a work the imaginal story comes first. Details, ambience, composition, materials must all work together to enhance what I have to say.

Thus in Still on the Line where feelings of anticipation and waiting hang in balance, there are images of hangers and a 'celebration dress' that are both aerial and earthy, that move frequently, perhaps capriciously between these elements before a series of changing 'backdrops'. There is ambivalence between the realist handling of the surfaces of still life components and their unlikely contexts. This is enhanced by the deliberate and deceptively simple titles that are reminiscent of Japanese Haiku poetry – an observation of nature through a human agency. Compositions work to suggest changes in the weight (or buoyancy) and slippage of the images.

COMPOSITIONAL ASPECTS

Because I am not merely striving to make a picture, but also create a view of the world, scale, size and tone are very important to the tension of the two dimensional works.

My thesis includes a range of sizes, from the large scale Banquet of Life, through to small pieces of On Hand. Many of my thesis drawings are considerably smaller in size and scale then those created for my Honours year. (Plate xii: fig. 27) This was a deliberate artistic strategy, not only to learn to draw effectively on a modest scale thereby increasing my range of ability, but also so that the passing of time could be evoked in a larger body of work.

[44] Goddess of crafting

The depth of the picture plane in many of the images was also a deliberate departure from much of my undergraduate drawings, and an exploration of various ways of increasing psychological tension and mystery.

For example Duet for One offers a deliberate pictorial compression of the space, commensurate with psychological tension; while the deep picture plane and dark tones imply a mysterious internal expansion of space beyond the sight of the viewer. Although drawn on a similar scale, the elongated rectangles of Bridal Sweet, coupled with contrasted tone suggest a more relaxed and expansive mood.

In many of the drawings tension comes from a sense of arrested movement combined with attention to living-world detail. Svetlana Alpers, writing on historical artists I admire including Carravagio and Vermeer, makes the point that:

> The stilled or arrested quality of these works is a symptom of a certain tension between the narrative assumptions of the art and an attentiveness to descriptive presence. There seems to be an inverse proportion between attentive description and action: attention to the surface of the world described is achieved at the expense of the representation of narrative action.[45]

Certainly this could be said with regard to much of my work when viewed individually. However when works that may be referred to as 'attentively descriptive' are viewed in series, for example On Hand and Banquet of Life, a narrative emerges from their collective representation. Increments of time and emotion are expressed by small variations and the evolution of props, figures and settings. For this reason they are ideally viewed together, although this is not always possible especially with regard to the larger works.

The spaces depicted in my drawings are not interiors, cityscapes or true landscapes, rather they are interiors or landscapes of the soul set in a recognizable and

[45] Alpers, op. cit. p. .xxi.

realistic space. As Casey suggests:

> A semblance… allows for alteration of proportions in the interest of achieving particular effects, aesthetic or rhetorical: hence even dissemblance comes within its purview…Visionary images are matters of semblance and sometimes of dissemblance as well…[46]

My drawings have 'emptied out' over time, becoming at once more complex and deep, yet generally less complicated, in fact often 'deceptively simple'.[47]

At present the finished works are usually tonal while much of the preliminary work is linear. The tension between tone and line has been the subject of a good deal of interplay over previous years, with the boundaries shifting in favor of one or the other from time to time.

Tone – 'feeling tone', becomes the means of expressing shadowy or secretive (hermetic) feelings, thoughts and ideas, of expressing soulstories. The stark lighting and hard shadows characteristic of the Three Ring Circus series completed during my Honours year has now softened, the boundaries have blurred further, if you like. (Plate xii: fig. 28) Therefore, while some recent drawings – especially the series Duet for One display a deliberate claustrophobia, a metaphoric darkening and weighing or closing down, others such as the series Still on the Line, have a lightened tone, an expansiveness including panoramic views of sky and landscape.

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[46] Casey, op. cit. p. 174.

[47] Heathcote, op. cit.

Plate xii

Fig. 27. Julie Heron Three Ring Circus—Grand Finale (in progress)
1999
Collection of the artist
charcoal on paper
300 x 107 cm

Fig. 28. Julie Heron
Power Games - Dog Daze
1999
Collection of the artist
charcoal on Stonehenge
75 x 54 cm

PRACTICALITIES

Much of the sense of form in my figurative pieces is the result of work as an artist's model, and years of creative movement and dance. I have a strongly developed kinetic sense, and a hyperawareness of the physical self, that enables me to visualize my body from many angles without the aid of a mirror.

I do however make use of digital photographs in order to understand the draping of costume over the figure when seen from the rear, or in difficult positions. I also find that moving through poses under the lens of the camera I am able to quickly think up new ideas and record them.[48] The digital camera was invaluable also in capturing the transitory initial images for On Hand and Banquet of Life.

Digital photographs are loaded onto my computer, and I do quick sketches from these, as references for finished drawings, finding the linear drawings livelier and more interesting than printed images to work from. Small linear sketches are also sometimes made when ideas come together, (Plate xxix: figs. 54, 55) and this is generally accomplished on any surface that is to hand, sometimes a sketch book, but often a bank slip, docket or back of an envelope out of my bag or car.

[48] Full credit must go here to my friend and photographer Sara Warren, for her sensitive interpretation of my ideas, and her keen eye. Sara has partnered me successfully since early art school, always entering into the spirit of my sometimes peculiar requests.

MATERIALS

Working with charcoal, assemblage and paper raises issues of delicacy, care and the ephemeral nature of the work. The fragility of many of my pieces is entirely in keeping with previously expressed feelings about the transitory nature of life.

However, in terms of the practical necessity of exhibiting, moving and storing works, my use of canvas boards in the latter stages of this research has allowed a portability that is not readily possible with works on paper. Moreover, the canvas holds both charcoal and fixative in a manner I have not found previously. This in turn has given me a sense of security that will allow me to reach out to audiences I had not previously felt were accessible.

Further, since I often find framing extremely problematic – frames truncate the view, canvas boards provide a practical solution to some concerns at this time. Their use is the outcome of experimentation with various surfaces and hanging devices.

In using charcoal I am not only able to produce an ephemeral quality of feeling and depth but also a range of mark making within the one work. Immediacy and the sense of history that partly erased lines give to a drawing are important in my own rendering and I tend to rub back a good deal in preliminary stages, varying the erasive tool depending on the affect I require.

Ghost marks, are of course far more apparent in the lighter works, and I find this entirely appropriate, a reminder of the soulful darkness where I have been and which I will no doubt encounter in the future. To this end I often seek out paper such as Stonehenge, which tends to retain some of the charcoal even after using an eraser.

Charcoal is easily worked, and lends itself to a variety of techniques. In the absence of every plastic, richly coloured and costly medium, I could still find in the ashes of Hestia's hearth, burnt sticks of sufficient quality to make marks (boundary

markers), to mark my presence in the world, to mark off the separation of The Woman Who Waits, mark time and times passing, to be a feature of my day, to see, and to make my mark with memory, naming and story.

CONCLUSION

I stated in the introduction to this paper that my research was primarily concerned with finding ways to pictorially express stories of my personal experience of the complex Homecoming process, as viewed from my position as a Woman Who Waits for re-union.

Further, I intended to create works that were imbued with what I identified as the quality of soul. For me, making art was and is a therapeutic as well as a creative activity, and I also expressed the desire to reach beyond the purely personal to embrace a social dimension within my work. Aware of the tension between privacy and disclosure, I affirmed my intention to use metaphor within the works, thereby allowing a range of possibility in interpreting my images.

I identified the Woman Who Waits as an embodiment of Home for the Wayfarer, yet suggested her actual circumstances as a central manifestation of the Homecoming experience were neglected or distorted.

In order to provide a psychological background for these felt experiences, I discussed the behaviour and attributes of the Greek deities, Hestia and Hermes, along with their associations with Home and Not-Home.

I turned then to the social, historic and personal circumstances of the Woman Who Waits. I suggested that although her experience may be framed by an apparently linear progression, her felt sense of waiting may consist of oscillations or cycles between scepticism and hope, unhappiness and discomfort as well as unexpected personal gains.

Finally, I surveyed artworks created by other artists in order to discover how my concerns had already been pictorially expressed, finding a particularly pertinent source in the ‘Penelope’ paintings by Brian Dunlop.

Dunlop's works affirmed the images I had already arrived at – that of the back view of the Woman Who Waits. The back view exhibits my understanding of the manner in which the facelessness of the Woman Who Waits allows her to be a metaphor for any waiting woman. It also shows the increasingly invisible nature of the waiting endured by the Woman Who Waits, an experience which reaches its furtherest expression in the metaphoric still lives.

The manner in which time slows for the Waiting Woman was expressed by extensive use of still life images, and by the overall ambience of the works.

The need to express the waiting woman's circumstances and emotions was made both difficult and interesting by their cyclical nature. As a Waiting Woman I often wearied of the sensation that I had been through a particular situation or feeling many, many times before.

I always found a means of expressing both the similarity and the particularity of each cycle in my favoured tonal medium – charcoal, until a particularly frustrating time found me turning with a bursting need to colour and three-dimensionality – the boundaries unexpectedly and yet so pertinently shifted.

The re-union stage of my own Homecoming took me by surprise, and created a strange leveling out of emotion that I struggled to depict. At this point the boundaries shifted again and I moved away from the personal and into the social with the series On Hand.

Despite my awareness of the open ended nature of the reunion experience, as stated in the final section of Chapter Two, I still felt the need to create images that rounded off my experience as a Waiting Woman.

Mysteriously, rather than the fine outlandish display of party hats, celebration dresses, slinky underwear and bridal clothing I had anticipated, my re-union experience could be characterised more by casual clothing, pyjamas and comfy slippers.

However, the images that eventually began to emerge were associated with food. Hestian images. Simple food, beautifully presented, made with love by my Wayfarer. The shared pleasures of the table; the shared pleasure of re-union…

Technically the two years of my Masters research project have enabled me in explore the use of my chosen medium – charcoal, in depth. Not only have I been able to venture deeply into the use of both line and tone, I have engaged in investigations of the interplay of tension between the two.

I have been able to work successfully from both imagination and from life, varying outcomes from near abstraction through to the intensities of Magic Realism.

A greater understanding of composition and spatial depiction has also emerged throughout the period of my research, along with an appreciation for the possibilities within a range of paper and canvas sizes. I was interested to learn techniques for working on a range of papers, as well as on canvas. This in turn has given me greater scope for exhibiting my work, and sharpened my intentions with regard to where, how and toward what purpose I intend to do this in the future

Throughout the research project I also pushed the barriers of endurance, discovering ways and means to refresh my vision. As a result I was able to enter forcefully into the creation of three-dimensional works – a period of much needed colour and ‘play’ that allowed me to express my ideas in a totally different manner, and returned me to charcoal drawing with much needed inspiration and personal distance. Other interludes furthered my appreciation of watercolours and acrylic paints and

throughout I had a flourishing garden that was as much an expression of art as the works produced inside the studio.

The past two years have therefore seen the resolution of a psychological and artistic journey of some duration. The works that form my thesis as such are only a small amount of the total output of six years of making artworks whilst undertaking formal artistic training. If, as I have inferred in Chapter Three, my thesis works may be regarded as a letter to myself and others, then the entirety of my work constitutes a pivotal chapter in my personal story. It is a chapter that has documented a good deal of heartache, personal growth, friendship and love.

Along with artistic techniques, I have learned about the release and healing the making of art can bring, the power of visual communication and the importance of passing on knowledge gained at such personal cost. From this a clear personal and social agenda for my continued artistic practice has arisen.

GLOSSARY

Angelos – A title of Hermes referring to his role as messenger.

Anima Mundi – The soul of the world. A Renaissance term used in Archetypal psychology.

Aphrodite – Greek goddess of love, creativity and beauty, whom Romans called Venus. Often described as ‘golden’.

Archetypal Psychology – The school of 'archetypal psychology' was founded by James Hillman with a number of other Jungian psychologists in Zurich in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Archetypal psychology is a post-Jungian or depth psychology, a critical elaboration of Jungian theory and practice after Jung. The term "soul" was re-introduced into psychological discourse via his 1964 book, Suicide and the Soul. Archetypal psychologists and therapists frequently draw on ancient Greek texts and Renaissance writers for inspiration. For further information, for example works by Hillman, Moore, McNiff, Paris, Kerenyi, Lopez-Pedraza, Kinsey, Casey, Avens and Samuels in the bibliography.

Archetype (s) (al) – The original pattern of anything. Used by Carl Jung to describe deep patterns that lie, for most part unconsciously, at the very base of our being. Archetypal psychology suggests there are no pre-existing archetypes there are only phenomena, or images, that may be archetypal. Indeed anything may be considered archetypal if an individual experiences it as such. It is therefore a perspective or manner of viewing experience, most productively described by the use of metaphor.

Assemblage – A method of composing a three-dimensional work of art by combining different elements, as found objects and painting and sculpture by the artist, on a hanging surface or independently of the wall.

Bricolage, (bricoleur) – The use of only the materials or tools at hand to achieve a purpose. (One who uses same).

Bridegeld – Brideprice

Enstorying – The making of everyday personal events into a narrative or story.

Focus – A central point of action, attraction or attention. Latin: a hearth or fireplace, because a focus is the point at which burning can be produced.

Haiku – Form of poetry originating in Japan, that traditionally takes as its theme the observation of nature through human agency.

Hero (ic) – In its mythological sense the Hero is one who overcomes great odds to achieve a certain goal. This usually entails the completion of a journey or series of seemingly impossible tasks. Archetypal psychologists see the Heroic venture as undesirable since they maintain it is ego driven or ‘muscular’ rather than an enterprise of the heart, soul and imagination.

Hermes – Greek god known for his swiftness, cunning and ability to move through boundaries. Employed as a messenger for the Olympian gods, he also acted as a psychopomp or guide for the dead. Equated with Roman god Mercury, and also with Trickster figures such as Coyote. The spirit of Hermes can be seen in words that have the prefix ‘trans’, such as transmit, transport, transgress and transitory.

Hestia – Greek virgin goddess, rarely depicted but felt to be present in the sacred hearth flame of the home, temple and city. Connected psychologically with ideas of the centre, the home, inward focusing. As Hestia Tamia she was the goddess in charge of the stores and food reserves. Paired but not partnered with Hermes.

Hieros Gamos – The sacred marriage between God and Goddess, Priest and Priestess, King and Queen etc, who unite to die and become the perfect androdyne. The spirit of Heiros Gamos can be felt as a sense of grace, sanctity or heightened accord during a human marriage.

Iconoclast – One who breaks images (from a hatred of idolatry), overthrows popular beliefs, conventional prejudices and attacks tradition or established standards.

Insight – The power, or act of seeing into a situation, a god-like act of apprehending the inner nature of things or of seeing intuitively.

Inspire(ation) – To breathe or blow into or upon , to infuse by breathing. To influence, move, or guide by divine or supernatural inspiration. (A divine influence or manifestation that qualifies a person to receive and communicate sacred revelation).

Kairos time – Participating in time, lost in the moment – a psychologically nourishing state.

Liminal – Of or pertaining to a threshold including the threshold of awareness, manifestation or consciousness.

Metaphor – A device in which a thing is identified with another, which it resembles. Used extensively in Archetypal psychology.

Mystery – A specific unknowable, not a vague unknown. Something to be honoured, appreciated, contemplated, revered, but not solved.

Nostalgia – Nostos – return home. Algia – pain

Oikos (or ecos) – Home. In the context of archetypal psychology this may encompass a human home, a temple or home of the gods, a location, country or nation, the planet, even the astrological planetary house. At the deepest level it involves the spiritual practice of making a home, and more mysteriously a home for the soul.

Persephone – Greek goddess of the Underworld. Abducted by Hades the King of the Underworld whilst still a maiden (Kore), she was eventually freed from her imprisonment by the command of Zeus the ruler of the Greek pantheon. Prior to leaving the Underworld, Persephone ate the seeds of a pomegranate at the instigation of Hades, and was thus constrained to return to the Underworld for one-third of the year. Persephone was guided back to her grieving mother Demeter, the grain-goddess, by Hermes.

Polis – Crowd, population, city. Public area as opposed to the private spaces of the home.

Psyche – Breath, life, soul.

Psychopomp – A conductor of souls to the place of the dead. One of the attributes of Hermes.

Romantic (ism) – Preferring grandeur or picturesqueness or passion or irregular beauty to finish and proportion, subordinating whole to parts or form to matter. (Of or pertaining to the Romantic.)

Soul – As used in the sense of Archetypal Psychology it refers to a quality or dimension of experiencing life and self, a mediation of events between us and life. It has to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart and personal substance. As referred to here it is not a thing, nor is it to do with theology. Soul, like Mystery, is a specific unknowable hence difficult to define.

Techne – Greek goddess of crafting. Referred to in depth she embraces not only the mechanical skills and instruments associated with crafting, but to all kinds of artful managing and careful attention and shaping, including living.

Therapy – To serve, to attend to, to nurse. Thomas Moore states that the word ‘chair’ can be found in the history of the word therapy. Indeed he remarks that his own approach to therapy is to sit down and forget everything he knows.

Trickster (ish) – Trickster is a concept which can apply to both living creatures, humans included, and complexes of processes in which no particular entity can be discerned, but which many societies attribute to the actions of a deity or supernatural being. Better known entities include Native American Indian gods Coyote and Raven, the ancient Greek god Hermes, and the Norse god Loki, Asian Monkey gods and the African god, Elegba. Murphy’s Law is a modern means of referring to their actions. Tricksters may also embody a positive force of chaos, which may seem at first to be disastrous. They have been characterised

as tricky, mischievous, treacherous and thieving, but also as Holy fools, the creators of lucky chance and sudden opportunity. As such they show a propensity for moving through borders, shadows and boundaries, including and especially between this world and the realms of the gods and of the dead. See entry on Hermes for specific attributes. (of or pertaining to trickster)

Twilight – A liminal time where the clarity of daylight vision is subtly changed and things may gain additional meanings. A borderline state or mood, where two sightedness, double meaning and duplicity may prevail.

Underworld – Place of the dead in Greek mythology, presided over by the god Hades, and his wife Persephone. Defined by Jungian and Archetypal psychology as the deep, soulful place of dreams, creativity, repressed emotions and desires and of the retreats into self, commonly referred to as psychosis, neurosis and depression.

Unheim – Not home, the uncanny. May also be interpreted as a 'haunted house'.

Vigil – Watch on the eve of a feast. Evening or nocturnal devotions or prayers.

Julie Heron : Selected Works 2000 - 2002

(15)

Fig. 19. Julie Heron (She Once Was a) Slip of a Girl (detail)
1998
Collection of the artist
charcoal on Fontenay
54 x 150 cm

Fig. 27. Julie Heron Three Ring Circus—Grand Finale (in progress)
1999
Collection of the artist
charcoal on paper
300 x 107 cm

Fig. 28. Julie Heron
Power Games - Dog Daze
1999
Collection of the artist
charcoal on Stonehenge
75 x 54 cm

Fig. 29. Stories of the Self
2001
charcoal on Stonehenge
76 x 56 cm.

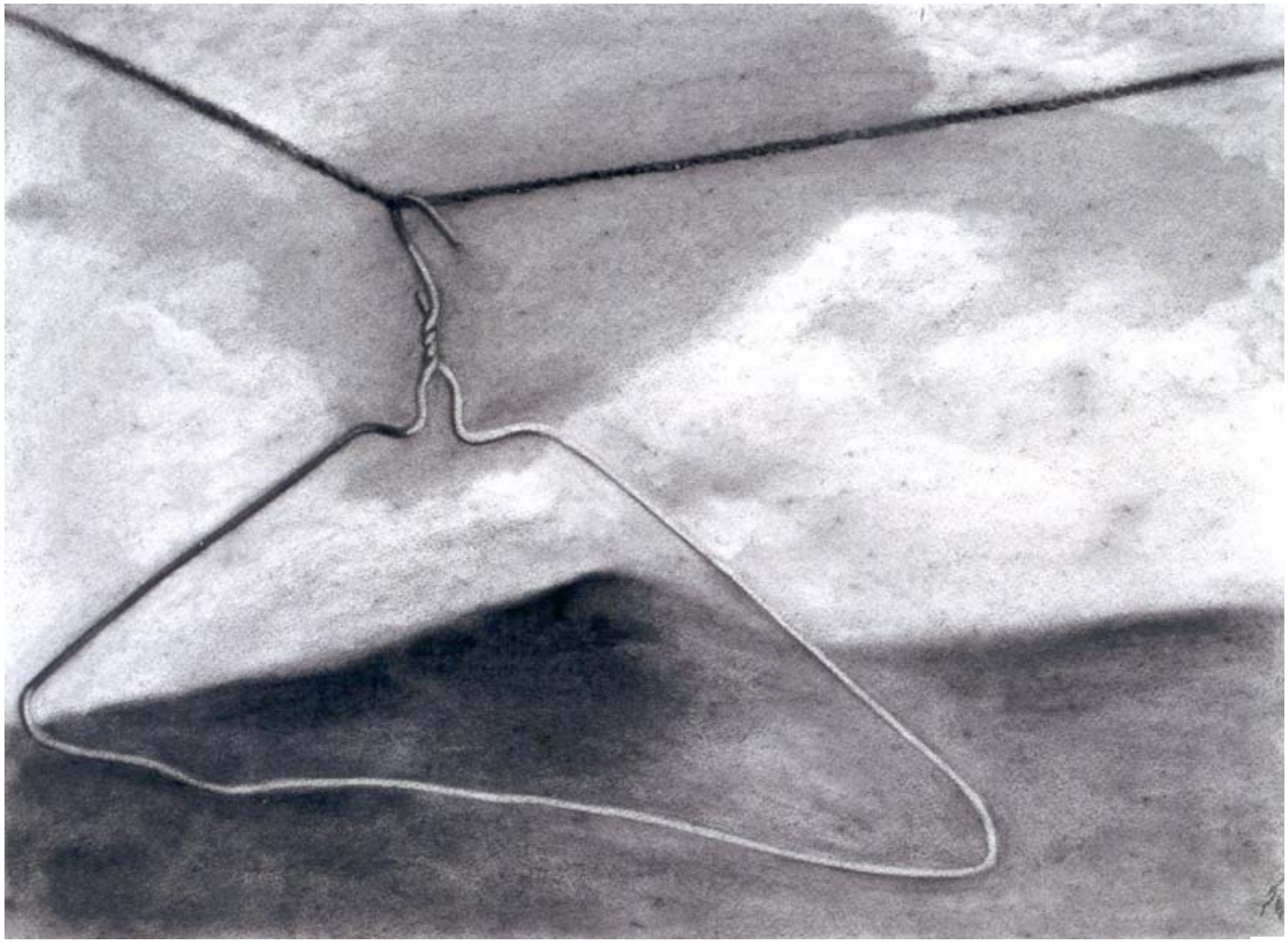

Fig. 30. empty hanger
still on the line
signifying,
nothing
2000
charcoal on Fontenay
55 x 74 cm

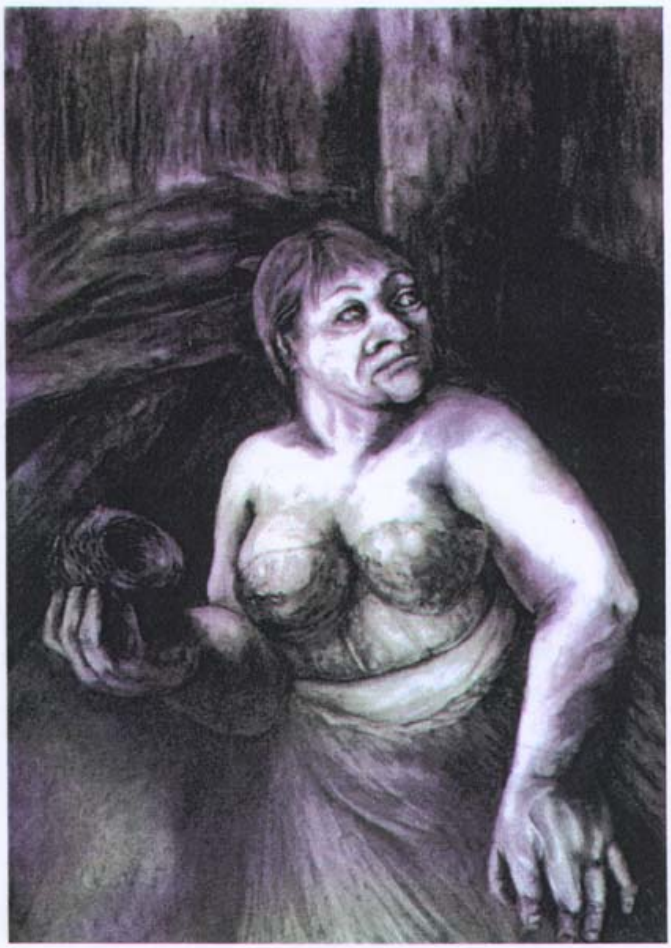

Fig. 31. The Nest
2000
charcoal on Canaletto
83 x 59 cm.

Fig. 32. The Role of the Red Carpet
2000
charcoal on Arches 88
28 x 38 cm

Fig. 33. Hope Chest (detail of outer surface)
2001
mixed media
12 x 25 x 4.5

Fig. 34. Number 13, Number 7, Number 21
2001
installation of three drawings
charcoal on canvas board
approximate size 25.5 x 63 cm.

Fig. 35. Conversation Piece
2001
charcoal on Fontenay
25 x 55 cm.

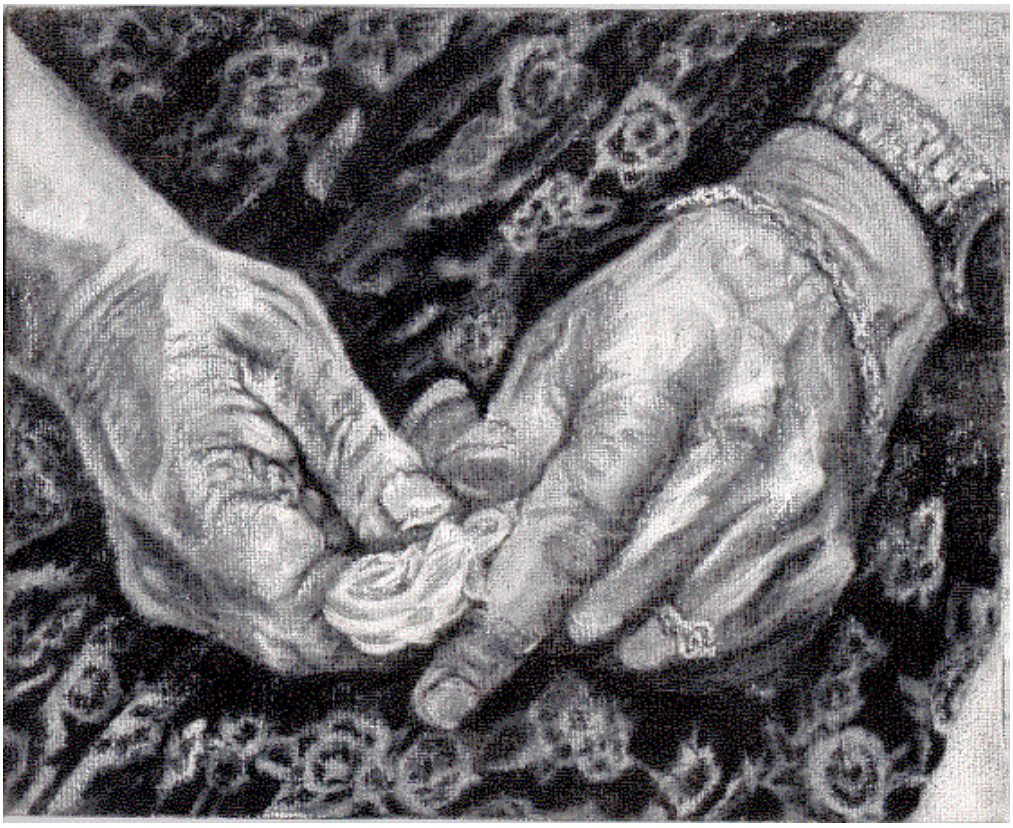

Fig. 36. Number 3.
2001
charcoal on canvas board
20 x 25 cm.

Fig. 35. Conversation Piece
2001
charcoal on Fontenay
25 x 55 cm.

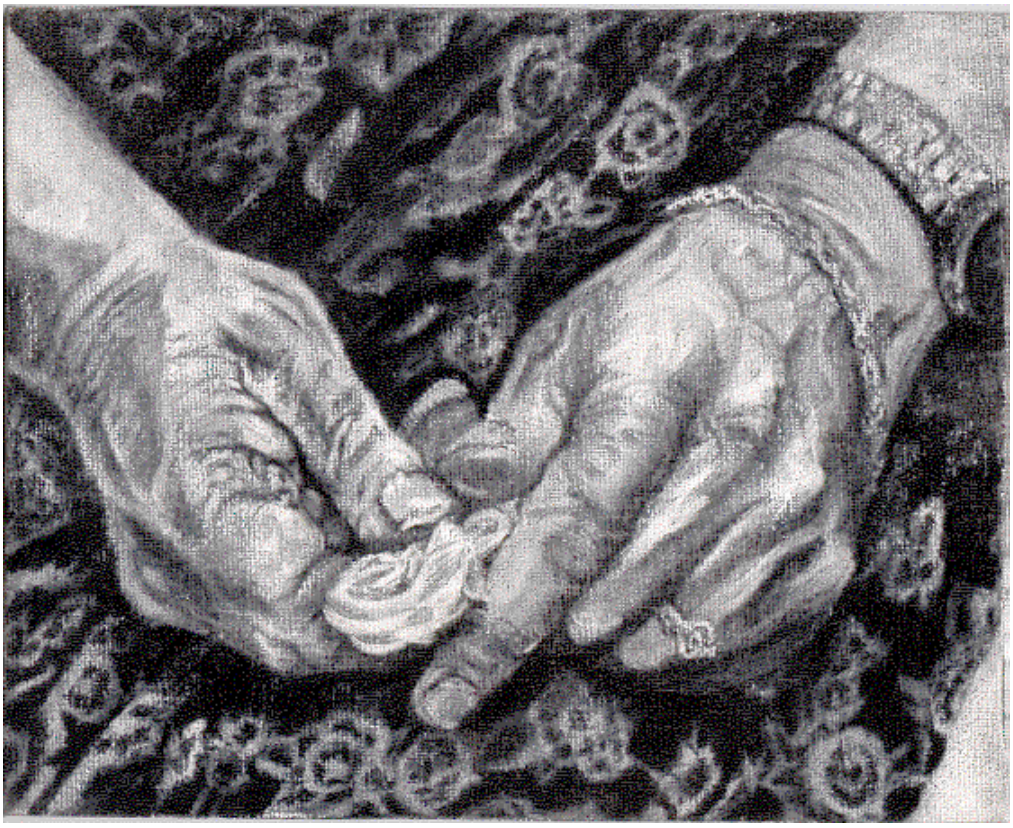

Fig. 36. Number 3.
2001
charcoal on canvas board
20 x 25 cm.

Fig. 37. Borderline State
2000
charcoal on Stonehenge
28 x 38 cm.

Fig. 38. Coming Ready or Not
2000
charcoal on Arches 88
28 x 38 cm.

Fig. 39. Vigil
2001
charcoal on Fontenay
25 x 55 cm.

Fig. 40. The Table is Set
2000
charcoal on Arches
28 x 38 cm.

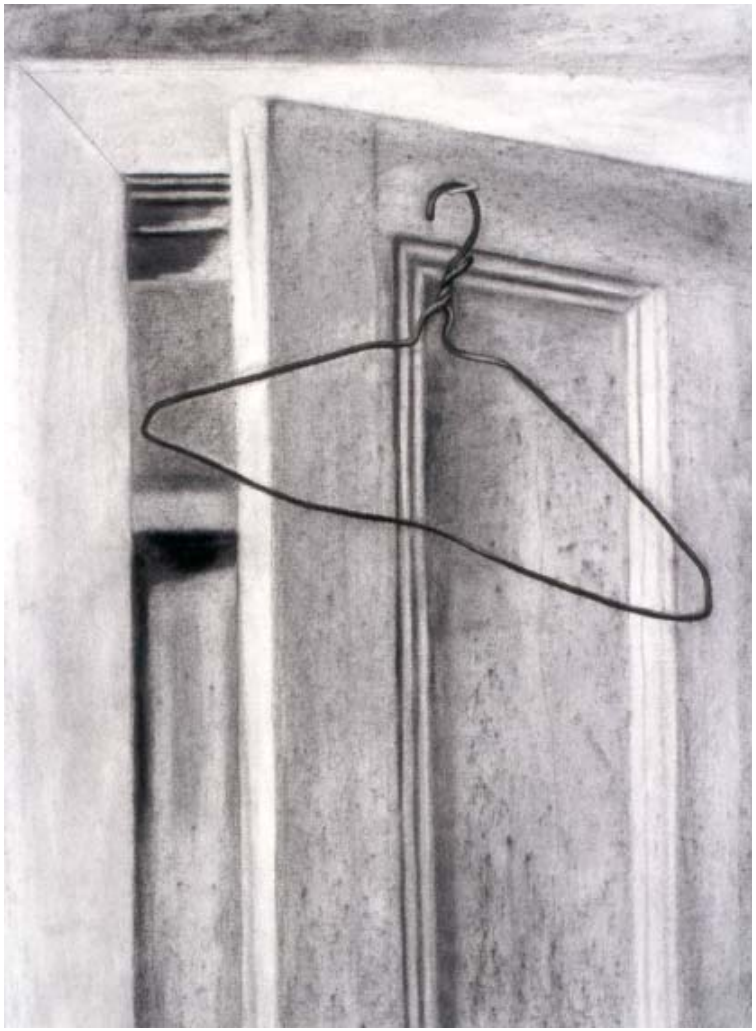

Fig. 41. (left)
empty hanger
hanging on
partly opened door
2001
charcoal on Fontenay
74 x 55 cm.

Fig. 42. (right)
celebration dress
thrown over
empty chair
2001
charcoal on Fontenay
74 x 55 cm.

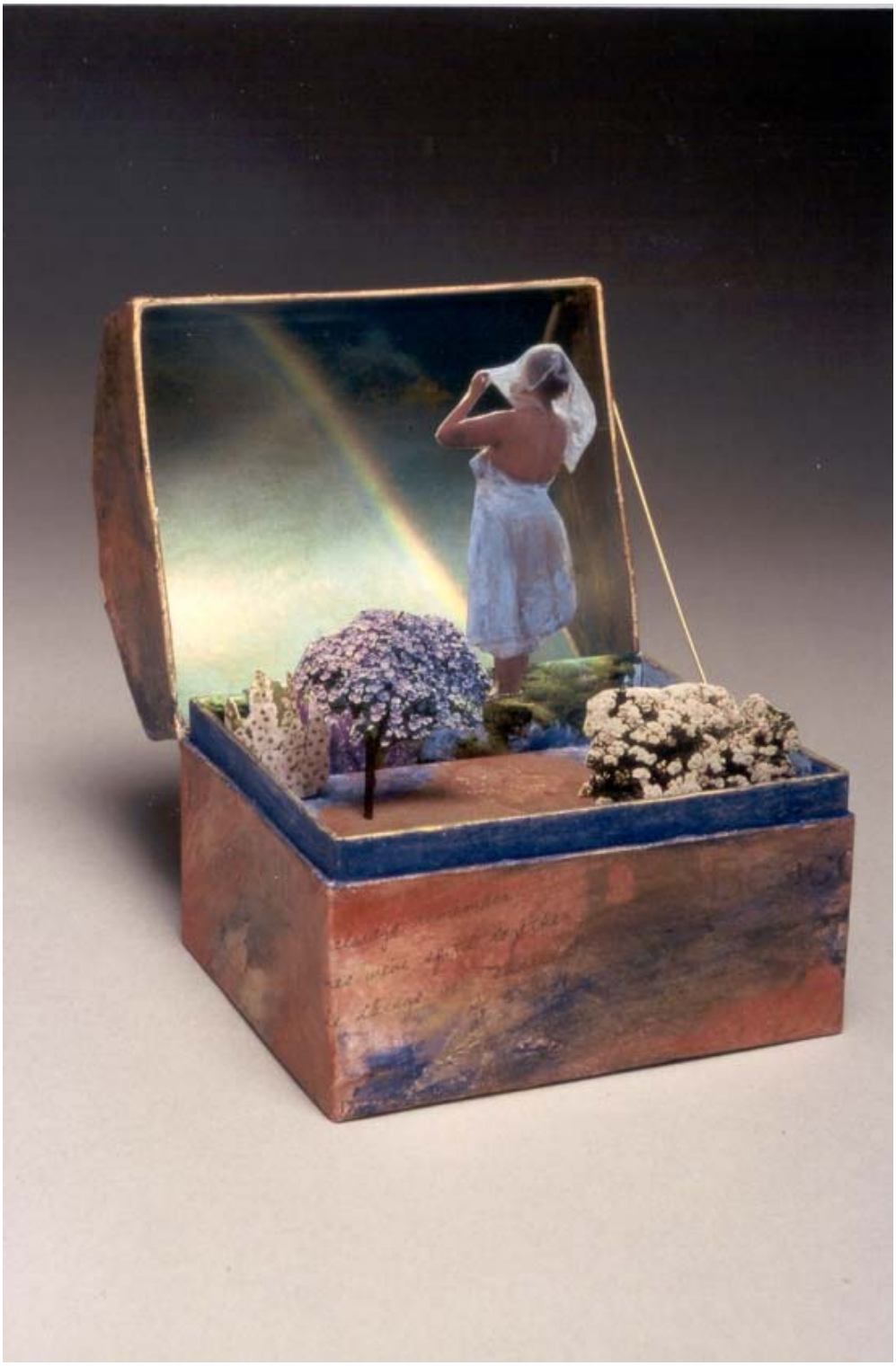

Fig. 43. Glory box
2001
mixed media
16 x12.5 x 18cm.

Fig. 46. One for Sorrow
2000
charcoal on Arches
28 x 38 cm.

Fig. 47. Flowergirl (detail)
2001
charcoal on Fontenay
25 x 55 cm.

Fig. 48. Two for Joy
2000
charcoal on Stonehenge
28 x 38 cm.

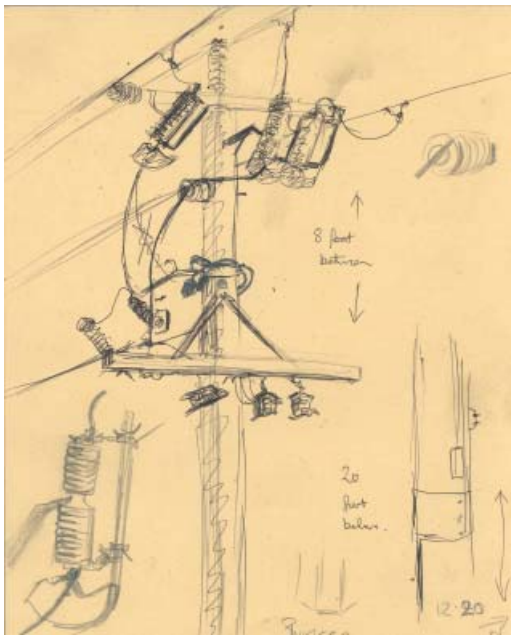

Fig. 49. Sketches of powerpoles
2000

Fig. 50.
celebration dress
hangs
just out of reach
2000
charcoal on fontenay
74 x 55 cm.

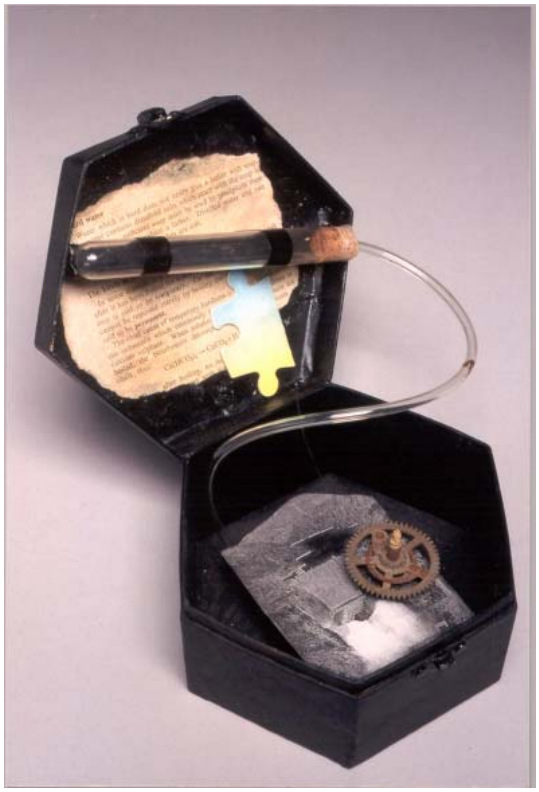

Fig. 52. Black Box: Heavy Water
2001
mixed media
21 x 21 x 20 cm

Fig. 53. Snakes and Ladders
2001
mixed media
triptych: approx size 21 x 42 x 3.5 cm

Fig. 54. Page from sketchbook
2000

Fig. 55. Sketch
2001

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